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# Looking for Mr. White: Uncovering the Furniture, Business and Life of Philadelphia Cabinetmaker Charles Haight White

Kelly E. Wiles  
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# Looking for Mr. White: Uncovering the Furniture, Business and Life of Philadelphia Cabinetmaker Charles Haight White

## **Abstract**

In-depth analysis of the furniture and business of 19th century cabinetmaker Charles Haight White (1796-1876). Biography chapter chronicles his social associations in Philadelphia, including his involvement in the Franklin Institute. This thesis also includes an analysis of White's portfolio, which is primarily comprised of works in the Empire, Rococo Revival and Gothic Revival styles. White, a large exporter to the South, had a clientele base of primarily wealthy Americans. Two chapters discuss White's patrons in the North and South and consumption in both geographic areas. This thesis concludes with an analysis of how White's furniture is interpreted today and also a thorough interpretation of his furniture suite at Springfield Plantation in Fort Mill, SC.

## **Keywords**

philadelphia furniture industry, cabinetmaking, 19th century, trade, decorative arts

## **Disciplines**

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LOOKING FOR MR.WHITE: UNCOVERING THE FURNITURE, BUSINESS  
AND LIFE OF PHILADELPHIA CABINETMAKER CHARLES HAIGHT WHITE

Kelly E. Wiles

A THESIS

in

Historic Preservation

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*In memory of Karen Greene Frazier and Delmer Ray Wiles—  
Thank you for instilling in me a love and appreciation for beauty and history,  
respectively.*

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# INTRODUCTION

In the Spring and Summer of 2011, I worked for Leroy Springs & Co., Inc., a recreational non-profit as a preservation intern in Fort Mill, South Carolina. The organization's headquarters is Springfield Plantation, a circa 1806 farmhouse still owned by the Springs family. The Springses were (and still are) one of the wealthiest families in the South Carolina piedmont and members of the family include a signer of the South Carolina Ordinance of Secession and the president of the second largest textile company in the United States. Over the past two centuries, the Springs family has acquired a large collection of fashionable furniture, most of which is still in Springfield Plantation. Much of the collection is Philadelphia and New York-made furniture the family purchased during trips in the 1830s, 1840s and 1850s. While compiling information for a thorough furniture inventory, I read a quote from *Squires of Springfield*, a 1965 book by Katherine Wooten Springs:

“A Charles H. White's, 250 Chestnut Street, she [Blandina] found the latest styles of furniture. There were European sofas, tête-à-têtes, and etagers (sic). And there were so many beautiful dining tables she hardly knew which one to select. Finally, she chose a mahogany extension table which could seat sixteen people.”<sup>1</sup>

I then decided to research the relatively unknown Charles Haight White from his source, Philadelphia. Learning the origins of the Springfield dining room suite and exploring Charles H. White has presented an opportunity to forge a connection between two areas of the country, Philadelphia and the South Carolina upcountry, which at the outset, I thought unusual to associate.

The industrialization of the furniture industry in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is an intricate and crucial chapter in this history of American Decorative Arts. A number of influential cabinetmakers defined this era, one of whom was Charles H. White (1796-1876). Working in the Empire, Gothic Revival and

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1. Katherine Wooten Springs, *The Squires of Springfield* (W Loftin, 1965), 167-8.

Rococo Revival styles, White remains one of the more unknown figures of this collection of craftsmen. Although Philadelphia furniture of this era is understudied compared to earlier periods, some scholars have dedicated much of their research to the 19<sup>th</sup> century furniture industry as a whole rather than a particular craftsman. Little attention has been given to single makers, especially White.

Charles H. White practiced between 1818 and about 1864, which is maybe the longest tenure of any mid-century Philadelphia cabinetmaker. He had showrooms and studios in various locations on lower Chestnut and Walnut Streets, two of the most thriving commercial corridors in the country at the time. A number of his pieces survive today in various regions of the east coast in private collections, historic sites and museums alike. Objects in Northern and Southern collections confirm the breadth of White's work.

In the decorative arts field, 19<sup>th</sup>-century furniture is significantly undervalued compared to its 18<sup>th</sup>-century counterparts. Museums founded in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century tended to exclude products of this period of because they were not seen as valuable and important, in short, not old enough. Early 20th century literature on American decorative arts also typically concluded with late-Georgian and Federal styles, leaving Empire and Rococo Revival unresearched. In the 1970s and 1980s, a handful of scholars began to realize the importance of Empire and Rococo Revival furniture and published a plethora of writings on the industry during this period. Still, there is a limited bibliography on 19<sup>th</sup>-century furniture compared to 18<sup>th</sup>-century furniture. Very few scholars today focus on this period. This study of Charles Haight White will help to bring focus to this era as one of transition and importance in Philadelphia furniture.

Chapter One of this thesis provides bibliographical background on White including ancestral information and his social status. This chapter also discusses White's years in Philadelphia, from his time as an indentured servant and apprentice to an established craftsman respected member of Philadelphia society. The 1836 court case, which questions White's character and morals, will be chronicled in this first chapter.

Chapter Two is a thorough analysis of White's work and the styles he employed.

Throughout his nearly fifty-year career, he produced works in the Empire, Gothic Revival and Rococo Revival styles. Through the images and discussion, one is able to discern White's stylistic evolution. This chapter also analyzes his work in context with contemporary pattern books and other literature, most notably *The Crystal Palace Exhibition Illustrated Catalogue*.

Chapter Three sets Charles H. White in the context of the prosperous 19<sup>th</sup>-century Philadelphia furniture industry as a whole. It chronicles White's career as a cabinetmaker with discussions on his warerooms, employees and advertisements. This chapter also describes White's typical local clientele through various case studies of Philadelphia patrons.

Chapter Four describes one of the more distinguishable attributes of White's business, his role as an exporter to the south. The wealthiest Southern planters and businessmen in the 19<sup>th</sup> century patronized Northern craftsmen. This interregional trade ended with the advent of the Civil War, so this short-lived moment in American economic history is worth exploration. This chapter also details White's vast Southern market found in places like Charleston, South Carolina and Natchez, Mississippi and includes information on the individual patrons and pieces.

This thesis will conclude with a discussion of Charles H. White's resurgence in the antiques world in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and an analysis of the varying interpretations of White's existing pieces. This chapter also includes a full analysis and interpretation of the dining room suite at Springfield Plantation.

A greater understanding of the furniture and life of Charles H. White and how his pieces ended up in their current locations leads to a fuller understanding of how influential the Philadelphia furniture industry was in the first half of the 19th century, and the co-dependence of both the North and South on each other for trade, economics, social life and status.

This exploration Charles H. White will inform Leroy Springs & Co., Inc.'s, the steward of Springfield Plantation, on interpretation not only the dining room suite, but the rest of their collection. It will give context to the story of the Springs family and how

they fit into the larger story of antebellum social life, economics, consumerism and the economic and social relationship between the Northern and Southern United States in the decades before and after the American Civil War.



## CHAPTER ONE | BIOGRAPHY

Born on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1796, Charles Haight White was the seventh child of Joseph (1760-1846) and Sarah Williams White (1764-1852).<sup>2</sup> The family lived in Shrewsbury, a small community in northern New Jersey, near present-day Rumson, Monmouth County. White was a sixth-generation American and a direct descendant of Richard Lippincott through his paternal grandmother, Ann Lippincott (c. 1727-1760/1). The Lippincott family (which derives itself from Lovecote) is one of ancient lineage and includes a handful of English nobility, including Ruald Adolphus de Lovecote, a trusted advisor to William the Conqueror and Roger de Luucote, a member of Richard I's court.<sup>3</sup> Originally a Puritan from Devonshire, England, Richard Lippincott settled in the Massachusetts Bay colony around 1640. He was officially excommunicated from the Church in 1651 and returned to England. He was heavily influenced by the teachings of George Fox and eventually adopted Quakerism.<sup>4</sup>

Facing religious persecution once again, Lippincott and his family returned to the New World, seeking refuge in the Roger William's tolerant Rhode Island colony. In 1663, the family moved to New Jersey joining the first English settlement on the Shrewsbury River, where Richard Lippincott was a principal landowner.<sup>5</sup> He died in 1683 and continues to be revered as one of the pivotal characters in New Jersey's early colonial history.

Throughout the remainder of the 17<sup>th</sup> and into the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Lippincotts played prominent roles in the town their ancestor founded. By the time Charles Haight was born, the Lippincott family had been in Shrewsbury for over 130 years. This familial association contributed to White's parents' and subsequent generations' elevated social

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2. Judith M. Olsen, *Lippincott: Five Generations of the Descendants of Richard and Abigail Lippincott* (Woodbury, NJ: Gloucester County Historical Society, 1982), 168.

3. Ibid., 1.

4. Ibid., 9-12.

5. Ibid., 13-14.

status, though it is unclear of the exact social standing and occupation of White's father, Joseph. Though the Lippincott name is the most prominent surname in White's family tree, he is also a member of the Williams and Wady families.

## Early Life in Philadelphia

In September of 1811, at the age of fifteen, White left Shrewsbury for Philadelphia, where he was indentured to Benjamin Paxson.<sup>6</sup> Paxson was a merchant living on both North Second and Cherry Street in the early 1810s and possibly White's brother-in-law. His sister, Sarah White (b. 1784) was married to a Benjamin Paxson (1776-1846), but little can be ascertained about this connection besides the name given the Paxsons' limited appearances in censuses and other vital records. A Friend, he first appears in the 1806 Philadelphia Directory. He married Sarah White on September 14<sup>th</sup>, 1809 and she moved from Shrewsbury to Philadelphia.<sup>7</sup> She was the first of Charles White's siblings to leave Shrewsbury. Other than Charles and his younger brother, John Ferris White, the remainder of Joseph and Sarah White's children stayed in New Jersey for the duration of their lives.<sup>8</sup> Charles most likely followed his sister and brother-in-law to Philadelphia in the early nineteenth century to work for Benjamin Paxson. As Paxson was a merchant, Charles H. White's introduction to cabinetmaking is unclear. His obituary states that "when a lad he made his way to the city, where a few years he regularly indentured himself to the cabinet trade," though which early 19<sup>th</sup>-century cabinetmaker taught him the trade is unclear.<sup>9</sup> It has been suggested, though not

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6. *Philadelphia: Three Centuries of American Art*. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1976), 264-265. Catalog entry 220, written by David A. Hanks, Curator of American Art.

7. John E. Stillwell, M.D., *Historical and Genealogical Miscellany: Data Related to the Settlement and Settlers of New York and New Jersey*, Vol. 1, (New York: 1903), 330.

8. Ann (b. 1872 m. Curtis Williams), Clarinda (b. 1787 unm.), Phebe (1792-1881 m. Peter Scoyen), and Mary (1799-1895 m. John B. Eveleth) White all appear in censuses from 1830 to 1870 as living in Shrewsbury, New Jersey. Charles H. White's eldest brother, Elihu (b. 1789) died in 1813 at the age of 24. The locations of George W. (b. 1794 m. Eliza Fields), William Williams (b. 1801 m. Eliza Fields), Joseph (1805-1846) and Nancy (b. 1809, probably died young) White cannot be confirmed through census data. Vital information from Olsen, pg. 168.

9. Death notice, Rebecca White, *The North American*, Vol. 1, Issue 124, Page 2, 8/17/1839.

confirmed, that White was indentured to Joseph Barry due to some stylistic similarities.<sup>10</sup> Throughout the 1810s, Paxson lived at 19 North Second Street and at 124 Cherry Street, which were both many blocks away from some of the larger cabinet manufacturers in the city. In 1818, White is listed as living next door to Paxson at 122 Cherry Street.<sup>11</sup>

## Marriage and Family

Though living in Philadelphia, White did not abandon all ties with his native state. He married Rebecca Stockton of Springfield Township, Burlington County, New Jersey in January of 1819.<sup>12</sup> Rebecca's father, Job, was a prominent citizen and large landowner in Burlington County. Like Charles, Rebecca had strong ancestral ties in colonial New Jersey. She was great-great-great granddaughter of Richard Stockton, another early settler of New Jersey and the fourth cousin of Declaration of Independence signer Richard Stockton.<sup>13</sup> They settled in Philadelphia the year after White started his furniture business. Between Rebecca and White's second wife Sarah, he fathered ten children, though only four lived past the age of twenty-one.<sup>14</sup> Rebecca White died on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1839 at the age of forty-two "after a protracted illness" at her brother's home in New Jersey.<sup>15</sup> After her death, White married Sarah Stockton (1805-1879) on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1841 in New York City.<sup>16</sup> It has been assumed that Sarah Stockton was the younger sister of White's first wife, Rebecca. Rebecca did have a sister named Sarah, but her husband was David Sands Newbold. The Newbolds lived in New Jersey and were

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10. "Charles H. White," craftsman file, Philadelphia Museum of Art. accessed 2-6-2013.

11. John Adams Paxton, *The Philadelphia Directory and Register for 1818*, (Philadelphia: E.R. Parker, 1818), 376.

12. Obituary, Charles H. White, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Page 2, 9/4/1876.

13. *Descendants of Richard Stockton, etc.*, (Philadelphia:1888), 118.

14. *Philadelphia: Three Centuries of American Art*, 264-265.

15. Death notice, Rebecca White, *The North American*, Vol. 1, Issue 124, Page 2, 8/17/1839.

16. "Marriages performed by the various mayors and aldermen of the city of New York, as well as justices of the peace, etc.: 1830-1854, New York: unknown, 1935, Ray C. Sawyer, ancestry.com, accessed 10/13/2012.

also White patrons early in his career. The 1870 census shows that David, age 64 and Sarah, age 60 were still living in Bordentown, Burlington County, New Jersey, proving that the previous assumptions are invalid.<sup>17</sup>

Between 1819 and 1824, the family lived at 33 North Second Street, slightly above Market Street. While White's actual furniture warehouse stayed on either lower Chestnut or Walnut Streets, he and his family lived in about five different areas of the city throughout the early and mid-nineteenth century. According to city directories, White lived at 74 South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, on Chestnut Street between Schuylkill Sixth, Seventh Streets (present day 17<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Streets, respectively) and Schuylkill Seventh, below High (present day Market Street) between 1825 and 1844. In 1845, the Whites relocated further south to 283 South 10<sup>th</sup> Street and finally in 1858, he settles at 723 South 10<sup>th</sup> Street, where he lived the remainder of his life.<sup>18</sup>

## The Franklin Institute

A characteristic of Charles H. White's civic life is his involvement with the Franklin Institute. Founded as a The Franklin Institute of the State of Pennsylvania for the Promotion of the Mechanic Arts in 1824, this organization's purpose "was to promote the useful arts by diffusing a knowledge of mechanical science with little cost to the membership."<sup>19</sup> The original members were a group of approximately 600 men also known as "Managers" whose interests and professions ranged from architecture, brickmaking, hatmaking, law, medicine and coppersmithing. Some of the most notable founding members were architect William Strickland, who served as secretary and architect, John Haviland, who was to design Eastern State Penitentiary five years later.

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17. 1870 United States Federal Census. Chesterfield, Burlington County, NJ: US Census Bureau, pg. 39, From Ancestry.com, *1870 United States Federal Census* [database online], Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operation, Inc., 2009 (accessed 12/14/2012).

18. *McElroy's Philadelphia City Directory*, (Philadelphia: Edward C. & John Biddle, 1858)

19. Bruce Sinclair, *Philadelphia's Philosopher Mechanics: A History of the Franklin Institute 1824-1865*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), pg. 32. According to current Franklin Institute archivist John Alviti, membership cost approximately \$3-5 a year.

Only had thirteen representatives of the furniture industry served on the original Board of Managers, one of whom was White.<sup>20</sup>

Along with his status as a founding member, White participated in and judged in the Institute's annual American Manufacturer's Exhibition, which ran from 1824 to 1874. These exhibitions function as an American precursor to the ever-popular World's Fairs of the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to Franklin Institute historian Bruce Sinclair, these exhibitions served as a "middleman—[and] provide[d] producers and consumers an opportunity 'of becoming acquainted with one another.'"<sup>21</sup> The popular Philadelphia cabinetmakers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century competed and most likely gained a number of new patrons in those mechanically and innovation-minded visitors.

The exhibitions awarded participants with a hierarchy of accolades called Premiums, ranging from silver medals, bronze medals, letters and honorable mentions. Judges scored entries not just on aesthetics but also on innovative, mechanical qualities or improvements to existing objects.<sup>22</sup> White entered his furniture in the competition six times between 1825 and 1851, winning four silver medals himself. His firm won silver in 1831 for a sideboard, but White "assured that it is the sole and exclusive work of his foreman, David H. Bell."<sup>23</sup> He first won silver in 1825 with his 'Ladies Secretary and Book-case,' which was only one of six pieces he entered. He also submitted an array of different furniture forms including 'one Loo Table, One Winged Secretary, One Spanish Chair and Two Cabinet Chairs.'<sup>24</sup> White's work was always highly praised by the judges, being called "very superior specimens of design and workmanship" in 1842 and articles

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20. *The First Annual Report of the Proceedings of the Franklin Institute of the Franklin Institute of the State of Pennsylvania, For the Promotion of the Mechanical Arts*, (Philadelphia: J. Harding, 1825), Pg. 34. Other Board of Managers members from the furniture industry were Joseph Burden, chairmaker, Joseph Barry, Upholsterer, John Clark, chairmaker, Thomas Embry, cabinetmaker, WV Griffith, cabinetmaker, William Hayden, chairmaker, Willfred Hall, organmaker, Isaac Laycock, chairmaker, Joseph Mickley, pianoforte maker, Isaac Pippett, cabinetmaker and Robert West, cabinetmaker.

21. Sinclair, 40.

22. John Alviti, interview with author, Franklin Institute, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 16 November 2012.

23. *Report of the Seventh Annual Exhibition of the Franklin Institute of the State of Pennsylvania for the Promotion of the Mechanical Arts* (Philadelphia: J. Harding, 1831), 9.

24. *3<sup>rd</sup> Exhibition, 1826 Abstract of Report of Committee on Premiums*, mss., Franklin Institute Archives, 7-8.

of “excellent workmanship and tasteful design.”<sup>25</sup>

The latter quote described a suite of Gothic furniture, an usual style for White to work in. This is only one of the two White Gothic suites furniture known to have existed, the other being for his daughter, Rebecca Stockton White Newbold. Despite Philadelphia’s strong interest in Empire furniture during the 1840s, the judges distinguished these pieces as particularly spectacular stating that “Upon such articles as these is based the reputation of our city for superiority of workmanship, and the selection of tasteful works, in which these articles can scarcely be surpassed; they are recommended to the most favorable notice which the regulations of the Institution permit.”<sup>26</sup> In addition to his involvement as a competitor, White judged the cabinetmaking and furniture invention exhibitions twice. He was White was part of the first judging committee on cabinetmaking in 1824, along with Joseph Barry and John Haviland, and on the Committee of Science and Arts in 1844. He served as a single judge for Stacy Costill’s bed screws, which he endorsed, calling them an “ingenious arrangement” and “recommended to all cabinet makers.”<sup>27</sup> Being a reviewer for this committee confirmed White’s status as a respectable artisan and authority on cabinetmaking.

## The 1836 Trial

Though White was both a revered artisan and Philadelphian, a court case from 1836 called his character into question. Once he established himself as a cabinetmaker and sustained a lucrative business, he indentured apprentices. While this was an extremely common practice, especially for craftsmen, the treatment of indentured

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25. *Report of the Committee on Premiums and Exhibitions of the Franklin Institute of the State of Penna., from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup> of October, 1842*, Franklin Institute Archives. and *Report of the Committee of Exhibitions of the Franklin Institute of the State of Penna., for the Promotion of the Mechanic Arts on the Thirteenth Exhibition of American Manufactures, Held in Philadelphia from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup> of October, 1843*, Franklin Institute Archives, pg. 15.

26. *Ibid.*, 15.

27. Michael McMahon and Stephanie A. Morris, ed., *The Records of the Committee on Science and the Arts of the Franklin Institute, 1824-1900*, (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1977), entry 415.

servants and apprentices varied from master to master. White had both indentured house servants and apprentices in the form of young men, between the ages of 18 and 22.<sup>28</sup> They sought to learn the craft of cabinetmaking from one of the best-regarded practitioners in the city, and according to an 1836 court case, they were severely mistreated by White and his brother and business partner John Ferris White.

Five of the apprentices, Samuel I. Watson, JT Johnson, ES Peek, R. Hamblin and W. Agnew claimed that the Whites did not provide “sufficient and wholesome food.”<sup>29</sup> Along with the apprentices’ testimonies, various house servants testified that White did not supply adequate food, though only for the apprentices and not the family or house staff. Cook Susan Saul recounted her experience trying to mitigate the situation:

I am the cook, have been for ten weeks, when I came there the boys bread was mouldy, they eat in the cellar kitchen. Mr. White and his family eat upstairs; Mrs. White made me keep the bread for the boys, till it was too stale to eat; it was rye bread; they had bad butter for six weeks, mouldy bread at least four times a week; the meat was not always good, it was frequently sour; they had cold dinners except on Sundays when they had the same as the family. I frequently told Mrs. White the bread was not fit to eat; the boys could not eat it; she told me to put it on their table, it was Mr. White’s orders, I did so, the boys could not eat it, they had an allowance of bread for dinner, it was not my fault, God knows it was not, I would fain have put it right: when I put more bread on the table than allowance, Mrs. White had taken it off.<sup>30</sup>

The nursemaid Sarah Short testified with a comparable encounter when White said the butter on his family’s table was “not fit for dogs to eat, [and to] take it down to the boys.”<sup>31</sup>

Despite their mistreatment, most of the apprentices never considered leaving their indentures. If they spoke of leaving, it was only “in jest.”<sup>32</sup> Perhaps leaving an indenture to such a renowned “firm of influence and respectability in the community” would terminate any chances of them becoming artisans of comparable and prestigious

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28. Two of his apprentices, Samuel Watson and Albin Barley, were 18 and 22 respectively during the court hearing of 1836.

29. “We Give Our Readers to-Day the following Report of the Trial between the Messrs White,” *The Public Ledger*, Vol. 1, Issue 104, 7-25-1836.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.



measure. However, between 1830 and 1840, the number of apprentices and indentured servants in White's household drastically decreased from a twenty-four, including three free colored persons and 11 males ages fifteen to twenty-nine, to a total of eleven persons in 1840, with only one 'person employed in manufacture and trade,' two free-colored persons and four white males under the age of nineteen.<sup>33</sup> At the advent of Philadelphia's becoming the "Workshop of the World," White's reputation as an unkind and selfish entrepreneur did affect his ability to sustain a lucrative business. An intriguing parallel arises when considering White's character. While exporting copious amounts of furniture to a string of southern ports in the 1830s and 1840s to wealthy, aristocratic slaveholding Southerners, he too was taking advantage of individuals in exchange for labor, without the common necessities and entitlements, in this case an adequate food supply.

Having been both an indentured servant and apprentice in his early days, one would think White would have been empathetic towards young men learning the trade, but this was not the case. White himself may have been indentured to his brother-in-law, Benjamin Paxson, but perhaps these family connections proved to be beneficial to treatment. Out of the 2,100 cabinetmakers, chairmakers, organ makers, sofa makers, pianoforte makers and other furniture craftsmen in Philadelphia between 1820 and 1840, only thirteen men (including both Charles H. and John F. White)

went to Mayor's Court for presumable indenture or apprentice-related matters.<sup>34</sup> This

33. 1830 United States Federal Census. Philadelphia Walnut Ward, Philadelphia, PA: US Census Bureau, roll 159, pg. 476, From Ancestry.com, *1830 United States Federal Census* [database online], Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operation, Inc., 2009 (accessed 12/14/2012). and

1840 United States Federal Census. Philadelphia Middle Ward, Philadelphia, PA: US Census Bureau, roll 482, pg. 274, image 561, From Ancestry.com, *1840 United States Federal Census* [database online], Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operation, Inc., 2009 (accessed 12/14/2012). The 1820 census also lists White has having 6 persons 'Engaged in Manufactures' and 1 'Free Colored Person,' a girl, under the age of 14.

34. Along with CH & JF White, the following attended Mayor's Court: Jacob Eglee (cabinetmaker, 12/23/1820), David Fleetwood (cabinetmaker, 4/2/1836 & 4/16/1836), Stephen Gerrin (cabinetmaker, 3/29/1834), John Jamison (1/16/1832), Jacob Jerrett (cabinet warehouse [proprietor] 1/16/1830), Isaac Laycock (4/18/1826), William Moore (cabinetmaker, 1/11/1834), Isaac Pippitt (cabinetmaker, 12/31/1824 & 1/8/1825), Enoch Tomlin (chairmaker, furniture warehouse [proprietor], 1/6/1825 & 1/15/1825), Joseph Walraven (chairmaker, 3/30/1833) and Jacob Wilkins (3/26/1831). Kathleen Catalano, "Cabinetmaking in Philadelphia 1820-1840: Transition from Craft to Industry," in *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 13, American Furniture and Its Maker, (1979), pp. 81-138, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1180603>, accessed 10/17/2012.



statistic only reinforces the fact that White's treatment of his apprentices was probably a rare case. Since the state of relationships between master and apprentices is largely undocumented, it is unreasonable to assume that mistreatment in some form did not occur. However, since some of the Whites' apprentices attempted to break indenture and took them to court, the severity the exploitation and neglect of White's apprentices becomes substantially evident.<sup>35</sup>

## Retirement & Final Years

It appears that White attempted retirement in 1857. On December 16<sup>th</sup>, he posted an advertisement in *The Press* (which endorsed White by saying "his stock is of the best quality and we therefore recommend this sale to persons about furnishing as being well worthy of attention") stating that his "entire stock of superior cabinet furniture" would be for sale at his warehouse at 912 Chestnut Street because he was "declining business."<sup>36</sup> However, White kept the title of cabinetmaker until 1860.<sup>37</sup> Between 1861 and 1876, Charles H. White appeared in city directories as either "gentleman" or "broker" and maintained his office at 333 Walnut Street. In 1862 and 1863 however, he was once again listed as "cabinetmaker," possibly generate income during the first years of the Civil War.<sup>38</sup>

Charles H. White died on September 3, 1876 at the age of eighty-one, leaving behind his second wife Sarah, daughter Rebecca Stockton White Newbold, and a handful of grandchildren financially secure. Unlike his apprentices, he cared for his

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35. On July 16, 1836 the following men and women were 'discharged from their master' upon court hearing: Samuel J. Watson, Eli Stewart Peck, Soyrich Short, Susan Saul, Peter McCutcheon, Albin Barley, John W. Elwes, Temperance Sanges and Richard Hamlin. *Mayor's Court Records for the City of Philadelphia, July-December 1836*, Philadelphia City Archives, accessed 11/15/2012.

36. "SUPERIOR & ELEGANT CABINET FURNITURE," *The Press*, Vol. 1, Issue 117, 12-16-1857, 3.

37. *McElroy's Philadelphia City Directory*, (Philadelphia: Edward C. & John Biddle, 1858, 1859, 1860, 1861).

38. *Ibid.*, 1862, 1863.

“beloved family” provided for their care. He left a substantial sum of money (\$2000) to his grandson, Charles H. White, Jr. for “his kindness and deserved merit in having assisted his widowed mother to support her family” as well as \$200 a year for his sister Phebe Scoyen and enough money to cover “support, maintenance and medical bills” for his other sister, Clarinda White.<sup>39</sup> Various newspapers in Philadelphia published his obituary, remembering him as “a well-known and venerable citizen” and “a man of strict integrity and of generous impulses, and leav[ing] a large circle of friends to mourn his departure.”<sup>40</sup>

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39. “Will of Charles H. White,” City of Philadelphia, Register of Wills.

40. Obituary, Charles H. White, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 9/4/1876, pg. 2 He was laid to rest in Monument Cemetery in North Philadelphia along with six of his children. During post-war urban renewal in 1956, Temple University targeted the city to condemn this cemetery, which had been full since 1929, and took over the property rights and planned redevelop the plot of land into a more modern space with parking lots and other 20<sup>th</sup> century conveniences. Temple University was then responsible for exhuming the some 28,000 bodies, relocating them to Lawnview Cemetery in Rockledge, Pennsylvania. Only 300 of the nearly 30,000 headstones were claimed by descendants and moved to Rockledge, leaving the rest to be used as part of the foundation for the Betsy Ross Bridge. Fortunately, the descendants of Charles H. White moved him and his children to Lawnview Cemetery in 1956. Katrina Ohstrom, “Watery Graves,” *Hidden City Philadelphia*, September 30, 2011, accessed 2/1/2013, <http://www.hiddencityphila.org/2011/09/watery-graves/>, (accessed 1/15/2013). *Historic Pennsylvania Church and Town Records*, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, reel 1217, From Ancestry.com, *1830 Historic Pennsylvania Church and Town Records* [database online], Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operation, Inc., 2009 (accessed 12/24/2012). This document bears a stamp with the following: “Removed to Lawnview/Lawn Susy, Sec. 77/Graves 57/Date Removed 7-2-1956”

## CHAPTER TWO | STYLE

A distinguishing characteristic of Charles Haight White's career is his ability to work fluently in multiple styles, notably Empire, Gothic Revival and Rococo Revival. His career spanned nearly fifty years, demanding that White produce the most popular styles and forms in order to keep up with changes in fashion and taste and maintain his place in the furniture market both regionally and nationally. Well-known, 19<sup>th</sup>-century cabinetmakers like Anthony Quervelle and George Henkels are recognized for work in a particular style, Quervelle in Empire and Henkels in Rococo and Renaissance Revival. Though Quervelle and Henkels never practiced at the same time, White was a contemporary of both. His 1854 trade catalog and other primary documents, reveal that White was concerned with producing the best quality furniture, and in the most up-to-date fashions by drawing one some of the seminal late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century design and pattern books.

### Empire

White's stylistic evolution, as well as his proficiency as a skilled cabinetmaker is easily discerned while studying his works in the Empire style. By the time Charles H. White moved to Philadelphia and began his apprenticeship in the furniture trade, Empire was quickly becoming the most highly sought after style for patrons of high-end furniture. Unlike its precursor, the Federal style, Empire tended to be much richer and included more directly archaeologically inspired forms. This time, however, these elements were very architectural forms intertwined with intricate carvings of foliage and the feet of animals, especially lion paws. For White, this style also allowed for adaptability to a number of different forms. Surviving furniture attributed to White in the Empire style ranges from sideboards, dining tables, dining chairs, dressing tables,

work tables, pier tables, card tables, sofas and desks. Out of the three styles White employed, Empire by far the largest number of forms found in a single style.

The period in which the Empire style flourished lines up directly with first half of White's career, thus he took complete advantage of understanding and mastering this style. It can be assumed that the majority of his work over his entire career was in this style and certain elements continue throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century to be fashionable. Charles H. White's legacy as a cabinetmaker lies in his status as a highly regarded as a master of the Empire style, though he designed works later in both Rococo Revival and Gothic Revival, these pieces are lesser known. Though the transition between Empire and Rococo Revival started in the late 1840s, White continued to produce Empire furniture well into the 1850s. This style allowed White achieve most individuality and interpretation in his forms. Empire motifs were used so often by so many different craftsmen, it is irrelevant to state that a particular pattern or element is unique to a specific craftsman. However, the individuality lies in how the craftsman combines features in designing a particular piece. The eclecticism of Empire with its varying Classical motifs like serpents, grapes, caryatids, cornucopias, lion's paws, fish allowed the large number of Philadelphia cabinetmakers at the time to create "their own distinctive interpretation of Empire furniture designs for patrons."<sup>41</sup> Though sideboards, buffets, dressing tables and other pieces look strikingly similar to one another upon inspection, two are hardly ever identical.

Personalization and interpretation was all too common among these craftsmen, but it is impossible to attribute many works to certain artisans based on this aspect alone; the combinations of these motifs are not signatures of a particular cabinetmaker. For example, Charles H. White's monopodium feet, gadrooning or cornucopias do not look different than those of Anthony Quervelle, Joseph Barry or Michael Bouvier. They were merely patterns from books, all replicated by skilled carvers. Because the

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41. Alexandra Alevizatos Kirtley, "Philadelphia Furniture in the Empire Style" in *The Magazine Antiques*, April 2007, 92.

vocabulary of pieces from this time in Philadelphia was relatively limited, it is difficult to attribute unmarked furniture to any particular. However, cabinetmakers favored some motifs and techniques more than others.

### Early Adaptations of Empire, 1818-1826

As the 19<sup>th</sup> century progressed, so did the level of detail and ornamentation in pieces of furniture in the forms of carving, gilding and brass inlay. Following the portfolio of Charles H. White is an exemplary case study in how this style evolved from simple, almost Federal in nature to highly ornate, on the verge of Rococo Revival. The early period of White's career, 1818 to 1826, includes simplified designs in both form and detail, void of heavy Neo-Classical motifs. A handful of these examples in cabinet form include a sideboard, now at the Germantown Historical Society dating from c. 1825-1828 (fig. 2.1), a dressing table built between 1825 and 1830 (fig. 2.2) and a pair of chests of drawers from 1827 (fig. 2.3). Each of these works exhibit ball-over-reel feet, a very unadorned turned foot typically used as case piece back legs for. White's classical works rely heavily on the finishes of the planes of the surface rather than decorative motifs. Drawers on the dressing table and chest of exhibit an ovolo form, while the rest stay flush with the plane. White employed historicizing Doric columns flanking the sides of the pieces; the dressing table is also capped with a simplified Grecian-styled pediment. Here, with all three of these early works, White defined his product for its high quality cabinetware construction. Producing well-made furniture with fine materials ensured his status as a trusted cabinetmaker and purveyor of furniture and allowed him later in his career to experiment with different forms and motifs, all of which he excelled in.

### Development of Style, 1830s

By the early 1830s, White's interpretation of Empire style fully developed. He

started to produce pieces that displayed collections of various popular Empire motifs. His sideboards and tables became richer and more massive while also teeming with intricate carvings and details frequently found on later Empire pieces (fig. 2.4). Many furniture makers during this decade often used pierced carvings and gilding on pieces like sideboards and on the bases of tables, White, for the most part, only produced relief carvings on solid wood. Instead of a more typical lyre-base on a lady's worktable, he opted for a pineapple (figs. 2.5 and 2.6-2.8).<sup>42</sup> Only one marked piece survives today showcasing White's attempt at intricate pierced carving: a pier table with gilded winged lion monopods from 1827. When compared to an 1810 pier table by Joseph Barry, White's is stockier and demonstrates carving via large forms rather than intricate motifs (figs. 2.9 and 2.10).

White excelled in detailed carving, he used it sparingly. His later pieces retain a substantial amount of unaltered, polished wood rather than extensive carving. He continued to honor his earlier attitude towards cabinetmaking in his focus on producing well-made, durable furniture, solidly constructed, of high quality materials and sculpted form rather than ornament. In this middle period White applied carving in a restrained capacity.

This personal style becomes evident when comparing four of White's sofas from the late 1820s and early 1830s to other contemporaneous works. A common aesthetic thread of limited frivolous carving in certain constrained areas run through all of his known sofas, whether they be box or Grecian-inspired. Typically, White, as did other makers like Duncan Phyfe, placed decorative emphasis on the legs of the sofas more so than any other element. In the case of the two box sofas (figs. 2.11 & 2.12), the feet, armposts, crest and front rails display a number of motifs and forms including bull's eyes, gadrooning, scrolls, Gothic Revival arches and ball-over-reel feet. Monopodial feet support the body of a simple, sinuously curved back with a hint of carving at the terminal

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42. For more information on figure 2.5, see: Henry Hawley, "Philadelphia Tables with Lyre Supports," *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, Vol. 75, No. 1, Philadelphia Tables with Lyre Supports (Jan., 1988): 15.

ends of the crest rail (fig. 2.13). Another sofa from the same year, of approximately the same form, exhibits only bull's eyes and linear motifs on the arms and rosettes encased in a panel at the tops of the legs (fig. 2.14).

A sofa in the Philadelphia Museum of Art in the same form displays abundant carving including grapevines, shells, gadrooning and cornucopias with hardly any traces of unaltered wood (fig. 2.15). Again, comparatively speaking, White's use of carvings and forms coalesce in way that makes his works distinguishably more unadorned than other Philadelphia cabinetmakers of the time. These other artisans produced works with a similar modesty, but not as often as White. Sideboards and other tables from this period display intricately carved feet. His carvings appear in column capitals, paw feet, fans, gadrooning, cornucopias and other common Empire elements.

Only two examples from White's Empire period can be noted as containing intricate carvings of small designs. A sideboard from 1827 (fig. 2.4) exhibits foliage carved on spindles and the around the arched panels on the doors. The Springs sideboard and buffet from circa 1857 also has four and two carved spindles respectively with pineapples (figs. 2.16-2.19). However, this rich ornamentation is counter balanced by limited decorative elements on the rest of the pieces. The 1827 piece especially is a very simple rectangular form with wooden knobs, simple rectangular drawers and an unadorned top. Because White's designs are modest, it is fair to assume that pieces with gold leaf and pierced carvings produced during this time are probably not from the workshop of Charles H. White.

White's shift from strictly linear case furniture with little embellishment to high Empire style with corresponding ornament can be understood by a comparison of two dressing tables, one from c. 1825 to 1830 (fig. 2.2) and the other from c. 1827 to 1835 (fig. 2.20). Figure 2.2, as previously described, only has embellishment in structural pieces like the feet and columns, besides the bull's eyes flanking each of the corners of the mirrors. The latter has the exact same form: four legs, a tilting mirror, four drawers in the body and two small drawers. However, the major differences between this piece and the former is the extensive amount of detail including gadrooning and adorned column

capitals in four different instances. The most robust use of decorative carving is the collection of scrolls and foliage found atop the mirror in lieu of a pediment. Nonetheless, White continues to use bull's eyes in the corners of the mirror harkening earlier Federal looking glasses such as those he might have made while an apprentice in the 1810s.

## Historicized Elements

White's Empire work exhibited a historicizing tendency. As America celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Signing of the Declaration of Independence and the beginning of the Revolutionary War, Philadelphians focused on their colonial past. Early antiquarian historians like John Fanning Watson published histories like *The Annals of Philadelphia* (1830), the Historical Society of Pennsylvania was founded in 1824 and committees such as the Commemoration of the Landing of William Penn were formed that were responsible for "conduct[ing] research and preserv[ing] antiquities."<sup>43</sup> In the 1820s, Watson conducted a vast campaign to interview 'aged Persons of Philada' in order to record first-hand accounts of life in colonial Philadelphia. Among these questions asked were 'What of Furniture—different between Walnut & Mahogany,' where it can be surmised that Watson was attempting to chronicle everyday domestic life.<sup>44</sup> It was from these findings that Watson wrote his seminal text on Philadelphia history. Within *The Annals* is a prose entitled "Furniture and Equipage," which Frank Sommer called 'the first attempt to reconstruct the house furnishings of colonial Philadelphia.'<sup>45</sup> White might have been drawn to this notion of early Colonial Revival because of his strong colonial ties in a familial sense.

Judging from his associations with the Franklin Institute and indirect admiration of the Crystal Palace exhibition in the 1850s, Charles H. White was an educated man.

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43. Robert Vaux, Joshua Francis Fisher, Deborah Dependahl Waters, "Philadelphia's Boswell: John Fanning Watson," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 98, No. 1 (Jan., 1974): 10.

44. Frank Sommer, "John F. Watson: first historian of American decorative arts," *Antiques*, (March, 1963) 300.

45. Sommer, 302.



He was most likely aware of *The Annals*' publication and possibly drew inspiration from Watson's writings. White's furniture produced during this time may display some of the earliest Colonial Revival motifs. Traces of 18<sup>th</sup> century influences and design elements can be found throughout White's productions during this time in both case pieces and seating furniture. Gadrooning is most frequently motif 18<sup>th</sup>-century used by White and other 19<sup>th</sup>-century cabinetmakers, mostly found on sideboards, dressing tables, worktables, sofas and card tables. Arched paneled-doors, a common characteristic of Queen Anne case furniture, are also found on two White-attributed sideboards (figs. 2.4 & 2.21). One of these sideboards also has early 18<sup>th</sup>-century, acorn-like drop pendants flanking each side.

The most striking representation of early Colonial Revival forms in White's portfolio, however, are the dining room chairs in the Springfield dining room suite. This set of chairs (figs. 2.22 & 2.23) is a quintessential representation of the Colonial Revival in form rather than motifs. The body of the side chairs (originally a set of fourteen accompanying two arm chairs) follows the standard form of a Queen Anne side chair from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. With a set of pad feet in the front and a solid vase-shaped splat, these chairs contain a range of other typical Queen Anne features including cabriole legs. However, instead of having an unadorned splat, White incorporated the cornucopia design on the top rail, with feathers on the splat and scrolls on the base of the splat. Compared to a chair dated 1825 and stamped with 'JF WHITE' (presumably made by White's brother John Ferris White and fig. 2.24), the Springfield chairs do not follow the same Classical guidelines but rather look to earlier 18<sup>th</sup>-century decorative arts traditions for inspiration.

## White's Influences

White owned a copy of *The Upholsterers' and Cabinet Pocket Assistant* by John Taylor, published in 1825, which indicates that he was conversant with style early in his career. Filled with patterns for Classical furniture in both seating and casement forms,

*The Upholsters' and Cabinet Makers' Pocket Assistant* was one of the seminal English pattern books in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Despite the fact that White certainly used this book, his physical works do not closely reflect Taylor's published fashions. White adapts some features from Taylor's plates but never fully copied a certain piece entirely. Plate 9 in Taylor's book (fig. 2.25) is a dressing table with a strikingly similar form as White's dressing tables (figs. 2.2 and 2.20). White also uses the same legs in Plate 46 (fig. 2.26) for one of his box sofas (fig. 2.12).

If any publication proved to be the most influential on White and his Empire designs it was *The Philadelphia Cabinet and Chair Maker's Union Book of Prices for Manufacturing Cabinet Ware* from 1828. This book set the standard for pricing furniture by features, ornament and wood and "were to be purchased and/or circulated among members of the trade in the City and County of Philadelphia and regarded as a reference for furniture forms, for methods of construction, and for types of ornamentation."<sup>46</sup> The book concludes with again a series of plates for typical legs, feet, arms, and glass panes that proved to be the most popular designs for Philadelphia Empire furniture. It is undetermined whether or not White owned this specific volume, but he certainly adapted these suggested patterns in his own work (figs. 2.27 and 2.28).<sup>47</sup>

## Gothic Revival

In the final two decades of his career, White designed a few suites and individual pieces in the Gothic Revival style along with Rococo Revival. Typically regarded as an elite style, Gothic Revival furniture manufactured in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century was carried elitist connotations, perhaps because of its historical qualities associations with libraries, and was not as often used as contemporary styles like the early Rococo Revival and late Classical. Cultural perceptions of the Gothic Revival furniture followed those of Gothic

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46. Deborah Ducoff-Barone, "The Early Industrialization of the Philadelphia Furniture Trade, 1800-1840" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1980), 47.

47. *The Philadelphia Cabinet and Chair Makers' Union Book of Prices for the Manufacturing of Cabinetware* (Philadelphia: William Stavely, 1828), Winterthur Library.

Revival architecture as well, especially in urban centers. *An Encyclopedia of Domestic Economy* confirms and perhaps introduces the theory of aristocratic undertones in the following passage:

“We omit chairs in the Gothic Revival style, as they are never used, except the house itself be in the same style; and we may observe that this style is, in general, very ill adapted for domestic furniture, and except it be design by artists of great taste, and who are very well acquainted with Gothic Revival architecture, and what little remains of ancient furniture attempts an imitation are generally very miserable, besides being extremely expensive.”<sup>48</sup>

## Gothic Revival in America

Philadelphia architects Samuel Sloan and John Notman designed Gothic Revival villas in the suburbs and southern New Jersey in the decades before the Civil War. The American clientele for homes in the Gothic Revival style was limited because Americans “still harbored lingering suspicions of anything European, especially an architectural style associated with the Roman Catholic faith.”<sup>49</sup> With the new Republic less than 100 years old, patrons of high-end furniture were still interested in styles produced in the decades following the Revolution rather than reverting to European, especially English influences.

Despite this penchant for the Classical, Philadelphia furniture manufacturers offered Gothic Revival furniture along with more mainstream, *en vogue* styles between 1840 and 1860. Most of these craftsmen were first generation French or German immigrants who were familiar with the style first-hand.<sup>50</sup> These men were essentially immigrants, working in European or American styles, not acknowledging American anti-Gothic sentiments. As a sixth generation American, White’s cultural orientation differed from the European-immigrant craftsmen. Whether or not he held anti-British opinions

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48. Thomas Webster and Mrs. William Parkes, *An Encyclopedia of Domestic Economy*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1855), 277.

49. Robert F. Trent and Harry Mack Truax, *Vaulting Ambition: Philadelphia Gothic Revival Revival: Furniture and Other Decorative Arts, 1830-1860*, (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Antiques Show Committee, 2005), 93.

50. Trent, 97.

is unclear; however he saw he could make a profit in this niche market, vying for Gothic Revival furniture, despite his earlier 'American' work.

Contemporary literature also suggests a distain for this inferior, unpopular style. In *An Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm and Village Architecture and Furniture*, John Claudius Loudon states:

“The design for Gothic Revival Furniture which we shall submit are few; because such designs are, in general, more expensive to execute than those for modern furniture; partly for the greater quantity of work in them, but chiefly because modern workmen are unaccustomed to this kind of workmanship.”<sup>51</sup>

Loudon asserts that Gothic Revival forms and motifs are more difficult to execute than carvings found on Empire furniture like cornucopias, foliage, scrolls, lion's paws and griffons. To 19<sup>th</sup>-century Philadelphia craftsman, that might be the case simply because he would not have been as accustomed to or as fluent with these designs as he would be with classical ones because they were not as familiar. However, a skilled carver could quickly learn how to expeditiously produce these designs once they became popular and desired.

## White's Gothic Revival Work

Charles H. White never advertised the Gothic Revival style as one of his fortes, but assured his potential clients he was capable of producing the same quality of furniture in this particular style. One of the most effective ways of relaying this information to a larger audience was through the Franklin Institute's American Manufacturer's Exhibition. In 1843, Charles H. and John F. White won Silver for “articles of furniture in the Gothic Revival style.” Out of the American Manufacturer's Exhibition's fifty-year history, this was only one of three instances when exhibited furniture was specifically described as “Gothic Revival.”<sup>52</sup> A little over a decade later in

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51. John Claudius Loudon, *An Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture*, (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, & Longmans, 1839), 1088.

52. In 1835 James Kate received an honorable mention for a Gothic Revival writing desk and in 1842 JP Sherborne submitted “beautiful specimens of furniture in the Tudor Gothic Revival Style”

1854, White published his trade catalog and delineated the styles in which his parlor furniture was produced including “all the newest French patterns and styles, Antique, florid Gothic Revival, Louis XIV, and Elizabethan, with combinations forming that beautiful style called Renaissance,” which he calls the “favorite of the day.”<sup>53</sup>

## Oakwood

Aside from his Franklin Institute submissions, the majority of the small number of Gothic Revival pieces by White was custom-ordered, the largest of these orders being the furniture and interior woodwork for ‘Oakwood’ in Burlington County, New Jersey (fig. 2.29). Cited as being ‘the finest surviving Gothic Revival villa in central New Jersey,’ Oakwood was the home of his daughter, Rebecca Stockton White Newbold, and her husband, Michael Earl Newbold, who like his father-in-law was a part of a prestigious colonial New Jersey family.<sup>54</sup> Completed in 1854, Oakwood is attributed to architect Samuel Sloan. A large structure with a mutli-gabled roof, Gothic Revival arched windows an arcade and turreted cupola, Oakwood conformed to the aesthetic principles laid out by mid 19<sup>th</sup> century architects and tastemakers like like AJ Downing. The property remained in the ownership of the Newbold and Hutchinson families but was vacant for the most of the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until it mysteriously fell victim to arson in 2002. Fortunately, the house and furniture were documented by both the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) and Winterthur’s Decorative Arts Photographic Collection (DAPC) in the 1970s and 1980s. At the time of the DAPC documentation, a substantial amount of White’s original furniture survived in situ. Prior to its severe dilapidation, a portion of the house’s furniture had been transplanted to Smithfield Mansion, a historic house museum and venue in Mount Holly, New Jersey where it remains today.

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in the form of two dressing bureaus. (“*Report on the Committee on Premiums and Exhibitions of the Franklin Institute*,” *Journal of the Franklin Institute*, Philadelphia, 1842, 12).

53. Charles H. White, *Charles H White Upholstery and Furniture Bazaar No. 250 Chestnut Street* (Philadelphia, Sickels & Reading Printers, 1854), 23, Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

54. “Newbold-Hutchinson House,” National Register Nomination, State of New Jersey, 1977.

Architect Samuel Sloan states in his 1861 book *Sloan's Homestead Architecture* that “the appropriate furnishing of a house or room in harmony with the style of architecture is of as much importance as the preservation of the order of architecture on the exterior.”<sup>55</sup> However, in contrast to this statement, the entirety of the Newbold furniture suite is an amalgamation of both Gothic Revival and Rococo Revival styles, thus in some spaces the interior architecture and furniture did not match as Sloan suggested. At the same time, however, Sloan used furniture plates designed by White’s competitor George Henkels, none of which include examples of Gothic Revival furniture. The presence of White’s renditions of the former style is staggering through the amount of built-in woodwork found throughout the house, which is really his one and only attempt at interior design.

Juxtaposed with the plaster, coffer-arched ceilings, large mahogany Gothic Revival arches, supported by a collection of colonettes divided the rooms at Oakwood (fig. 2.30 & 2.31). The structural use of these arches was apparent in more principal spaces like the entries into the bay windows on the façade and the delineation between the stair hall and front hall. Secondary spaces such as portals into peripheral rooms are capped with Greek Revival door surrounds, a squat pediment and pilasters. This same form is found in a set of built-in bookcases, which appear to be in the second floor stair hall (fig. 2.32). These built-ins also are reminiscent of some of White’s earlier, more reserved work, more specifically the small sideboard at the Germantown Historical Society (fig. 2.1). Continued along the walls of the first floor Wainscoting, which was also repeated in the spandrel panel on the main stair.

Similarities among the Oakwood interior woodwork and Charles H. White’s actual furniture are also evident on three particular elements of the house: the newel post, front doors and detached bookcase (fig. 2.33-2.35). White employed a variation of the same motifs throughout these three forms, giving congruency to both the architectural and furniture forms. Both the HABS and DAPC photographs suggest that

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55. Samuel Sloan, *Sloan's Homestead Architecture*, (Philadelphia: JB Lippincott & Co., 1870), 311.

these three features were the most detailed interior aspects of the house; the spaces documented throughout the house appear to be very simple, filled with paneling and strong but finely-crafted door and window surrounds. The newel post was an octagonal pillar with a paneled base and elongated tapered shaft. Within this shaft is a collection of various Gothic Revival motifs including squat pointed arches, mimicking the form of tracery followed by quatrefoils (which are also found on the balustrades on the façade) encased in circles. Atop the quatrefoils are singular foliage designs, resembling cresting, commonly found on Italianate and Gothic Revival structures.

The bookcase again exhibits some of the same Gothic Revival forms as the newel post. This piece, however, was most likely in either the library or parlor, thus did not share a direct space with the newel post; there was not an interplay between these two decorative forms, but they still retained similar motifs that interconnected the decorative scheme of the entire house. The bottom four cabinets retain a simple form, paneled with stile and rail construction, while the top allowed White to showcase his carving skills and creates tracery from wood. Here, the same pointed arches repeat four times below a pair of elongated trefoils, filled in with cresting forms. The terminal ends of these arches form around a larger variation of the same circle-encased quatrefoils, which are flanked at the bottom by two trefoils that fit into the bottom corners. This heavy tracery and glass are encased in a finely-crafted simple frame, equipped with a bold cornice and bolection molding on the cabinet doors. The culmination of these forms and motifs makes Oakwood White's only documented statement of Gothic Revival.

## Rococo Revival

Charles H. White concluded his stylistic evolution during the 1850s with works in the Rococo Revival style. Gaining popularity in the 1830s in Europe, Rococo Revival style was "a creation of its own time, yet is in harmony with eighteenth-century concepts of the curvilinear forms."<sup>56</sup> Limited works exist today in this particular style, not as

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56. Helen Comstock, *American Furniture: Seventh, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Styles*,



much as Empire but more than Gothic Revival. The prevalence of Rococo Revival and White's career only overlap for approximately a decade or so, as the Rococo Revival's popularity rose as a result of the Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851. Fewer than fifteen of White's Rococo Revival pieces survive, most of which are chairs, settees or sofas. In these pieces we see exemplary carving, both in relief and in the solid and in pierced forms. Very infrequently did White employ pierced woodwork in his earlier Empire pieces, but the Rococo Revival style called for more use of this. Today, White is best known for his command of the Empire style. Coincidentally, however, out of his three sets of furniture (one worktable, one armchair and one parlor suite consisting of a side chair, arm chair and settee) currently in permanent collections at museums in the United States, two of them are Rococo Revival.<sup>57</sup> This style also transcended geographical boundaries, as it appealed to both local audiences as well as his Southern patrons.

The entirety of White's surviving Rococo Revival pieces is parlor furniture. His parlor, library and hall furniture offerings significantly overshadow boudoir or chamber furniture selections in his trade catalog. At the time of publication, the proliferation of the Rococo Revival style in antebellum America was rampant and even though White offered Gothic, Elizabethan and early Renaissance Revival, the majority of his work during the 1850s was in this style. Thus, the quantity of Rococo Revival parlor furniture produced outnumbered other styles because it was "the preferred choice for parlors, or 'a drawing room where a lady of elegant manners and educated tastes might appropriately receive her guests.'"<sup>58</sup> Even the parlor furniture for his daughter's house Gothic Revival villa, Oakwood, was a Rococo Revival suite, which included an étagère, valued at about \$300 in 1854. Étagères, like Empire sideboards from decades before, White was able to profit from a new form of furniture.

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(Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, 2007), 282.

57. The Philadelphia Museum of Art currently has on display a White worktable, c. 1825-30 (fig. 2.6) The Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh, PA has a pair of White armchairs from c. 1853 (fig. 3.2). The Brooklyn Museum in Brooklyn, NY has a parlor suite with an armchair, side chair and settee c. 1855 (figs. 2.36-2.38).

58. Jason Busch, "Equal to Any in the World": Rococo Revival Furniture in America" in *Rococo: The Continuing Curve, 1730-2008* (New York: Assoline Books, 2008), 195.



## White's Rococo Revival Forms

Typically, the forms of White's Rococo Revival seating furniture follow the already established forms 18<sup>th</sup>-century French furniture like that of the Louis Quatorze and Louis Seize. Dainty, squat cabriole legs, full curved backs, rosettes and other motifs on both the crest rail and front rail with plush upholstery tended to be the norm for these earlier, historicized works. This form was the most common in White's repertoire. Still, White chose to maintain his plain style. The pierced carving, especially in the Brooklyn Museum suite, is apparent but reserved and does not overshadow the other elements of the chair (figs. 2.36-2.38). White took full advantage of his skill in the tête-à-tête since he adorned the top of the middle of the sofa with a large pinnacle of C-scrolls. Despite this heavy ornament, White's emphasis on form and woodwork rather than on ornament is visible on this piece. One atypical feature of this particular tête-à-tête is the large curved band of upholstered wood between the two chair forms. This section of the sofa is not necessarily functional. The recline of the back is too far for one to sit without any full and proper back support. Thus, this area of the sofa was probably more than likely visible, even with the ends occupied. This constant visibility meant that this particular feature needed to be as ornate as possible.

## The Revolving Sofa

White's collection of Rococo Revival sofas include a form called a "revolving sofa" (figs. 2.39 and 2.40). This peculiar design consists of three particular pieces, two chairs and ottoman type form in the middle, connected by a shared base. In his 1854 trade catalog, White does not specifically mention revolving sofa as a piece he was capable of producing. However, this innovative form could be represented under his category "Parlor Furniture, best French Styles and New Patterns" that includes a number of different tables, chairs and sofa that could be fashioned in a variety of

ways. White citing this category as “best French Styles” he most certainly means some form of Rococo Revival. Throughout pattern books, advertisements and catalogs, the phrase Rococo Revival was interchangeable with a handful of terms including “Louis Quartorze,’ ‘modern French’ and ‘antique French,’ reinforcing its connections with the curvilinear, naturalistic designs associated with the reigns of Louis XIV (r. 1643-1715) and particularly Louis XV (r. 1715-74).”<sup>59</sup>

The name ‘revolving sofa’ most likely is derived from the 1865 inventory of Mrs. Marian Kelly Ferry of Melrose Plantation in Natchez. The sofa has since been attributed to White because of the fact that the house has two labeled White pieces and there is also a stenciled White ‘revolving sofa’ in Natchez in a private collection from c. 1852-1857. She valued the sofa at \$85, which is complementary to the \$75 to \$95 range White suggests for his “Brocatelle or Plush medium tête-à-tête.”<sup>60</sup> Revolving sofas were also reserved for southern clients. The three known to exist are located in or southern provenances. The revolving sofa at Melrose is also the only surviving example of any of White’s seating furniture with a balloon back, the rest have oval shaped backs on both chairs and sofas. This sofa, of all of White’s later work, mostly closely resembles any of the plates from the Crystal Palace catalog. The plates he chose for his catalog were almost exclusively all balloon-back chairs because they were more difficult to produce. Publicizing this form allowed the consumer to know that he was capable of producing it, though it seems to be not as popular as White intended.

White could have invented this form after realizing that the unused space in the middle of a sofa. The revolving sofa, essentially an improved version of the typical tête-à-tête, took advantage of the central space by placing a table between the two chairs. The table was removable, which allowed for the central plush area to turn into an ottoman if needed. The revolving sofa required a large, sturdy base to support the swiveling seats, so the typical dainty Rococo Revival legs could not support an entire form of this size.

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59. Busch, “Equal to Any,” 194.

60. Charles H. White, *Charles H White Upholstery and Furniture Bazaar No. 250 Chestnut Street*, (Philadelphia, Sickels & Reading Printers, 1854), 22. Athenaeum of Philadelphia. Carol Petravage, *Historic Furnishings Report: Melrose*, National Parks Service, 2004, 47.

Thus, White employed large ball-over-reel feet, six in total below the two chairs and ottoman. In his later works, the legs usually held the most intricate detailing. In lieu of this carving, the arms contained some of the most elaborate carvings ever produced from White's workshop. All three known revolving sofas have almost the exact same three-dimensional dolphin-head motifs.

## The Trade Catalog

White's 1854 Trade Catalog includes images of fashionable furniture White wanted his customers to know he could produce. These designs were not his own, but plates from the Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851, a focus of taste-making at the time. Generally the plates White opted to illustrate, included "captions...apparently written by or for White, but suggests to the readers that the furniture represented in the wood cuts were made by the firm" complemented mainstream fashions of 19<sup>th</sup>-century America, Rococo as either *Louis Quartorze* or *Louis Quinze* and classically inspired Greco-Roman forms (figs. 2.41-2.45).<sup>61</sup> He did, however include both German Gothic Revival and Elizabethan furniture in conjunction with these other obvious selections. The Messrs. T. Hoffmeister & Co. of Saxe-Coburg designed the Gothic Revival armchair "of a useful and decorative character" (fig. 2.46).<sup>62</sup> However, White's existing works suggest that he never created a piece as elaborate and as academically Gothic as the Hoffmeister chair. Judging by White's associations with Samuel Sloan and Gothic Revival furniture interpreted for the American market, he most likely crafted more reserved, vernacular Gothic Revival forms typical of 19<sup>th</sup>-century pattern books like Sloan's, Loudon's and Downing's.

T. Hoffmeister & Co. was just one of numerous European cabinetmakers that influenced White's style. Through these selections, White credited London and continental craftsmen as the arbiters of 19<sup>th</sup>-century fashionable furniture designs.

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61. Jason Busch, "Such a Paradise Can be Made on Earth:" *Furniture Patronage and Consumption in Natchez, Mississippi, 1828-1863* (MA Thesis, University of Delaware, 1998), 190.

62. *The Crystal Palace Exhibition Illustrated Catalogue, London 1851: An Unabridged Republication of The Art-Journal*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1970), 291.

Using European designs showcased in the 1851 Exposition, White hoped to convey to potential clients that he his work achieved the same high-end taste and domesticity. In general, compared to those in his catalog, White's works are not nearly as elaborate or extravagant. A few of these pieces from the exhibition, including an armchair, pier table, console glass and table originally garnered either gilding or ebony, a practice and material that White almost never employed. Curator Jason Busch confirms this point when describing White's relationship to furniture patrons in Natchez, Mississippi, stating that: "Considering the only known examples of furniture marked by White between 1851 and 1860, there is little indication that White could even produce furniture of the same detail of carving and design that he included in his catalogue."<sup>63</sup> However, he only chose one plate from an American company, an ebony pier table from Doe, Hazelton & Co., of Boston.

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63. Busch, "Equal to Any," 190.



*Figure 2.1:* Sideboard, Charles H. White, c. 1824-28, Philadelphia  
Germantown Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA  
Originally owned by Bronson Alcott, Gift of Edwin Jellett, c. 1913-15  
Mahogany  
Photo by Laura Keim



*Figure 2.2:* Dressing table, Charles H. White, c. 1825-30, Philadelphia  
Collection of Mr. F.J. Carey III  
Mahogany  
Boor, *Philadelphia Empire Furniture*, pg. 473





*Figure 2.3: Chest of drawers, attributed to Charles H. White, c. 1827, Philadelphia  
Private Collection  
Mahogany  
Philadelphia Empire Furniture, Boor, 466*



*Figure 2.4:* Sideboard, attributed to Charles H. White, c. 1827, Philadelphia  
Private Collection  
Mahogany  
Boor, *Philadelphia Empire Furniture*, 406





*Figure 2.5:* Lady's work table, artist unknown, possibly Michael Bouvier,  
c . 1815-25, Philadelphia  
Philadelphia Museum of Art  
Bequest of Caroline D. Bache, 1958  
Mahogany  
Hawley, *Philadelphia Table with Lyre Supports*, 15



*Figure 2.6:* Lady's work table, Charles H. White, c. 1825-40, Philadelphia  
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia PA  
Purchased with the Thomas Skelton Harrison Fund, 1973  
Mahogany  
Photo by Author



*Figure 2.7:* Pineapple pedestal of Lady's work table, Charles H. White, c. 1825-40,  
Philadelphia  
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia PA  
Purchased with the Thomas Skelton Harrison Fund, 1973  
Mahogany  
Photo by Author



*Figure 2.8:* Monopodium foot of lady's work table, Charles H. White, c. 1825-40,  
Philadelphia  
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia PA  
Purchased with the Thomas Skelton Harrison Fund, 1973  
Mahogany  
Photo by Author





*Figure 2.9:* Pier table, Joseph B. Barry & Son, c. 1815, Philadelphia  
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY

Purchase, Friends of the American Wing Fund, Anonymous Gift, George M. Kaufman Gift, Sansbury- Mills Fund; Gifts of the Members of the Committee of the Bertha King Benkard Memorial Fund, Mrs. Russell Sage, Mrs. Frederick Wildman, F. Ethel Wickham, Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch, and Mrs. F. M. Townsend, by exchange; and John Stewart Kennedy Fund and Bequests of Martha S. Tiedeman and W. Gedney Beatty, by exchange, 1976

Mahogany  
[www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)



*Figure 2.10* Peir Table, Charles H. White, c. 1827, Philadelphia  
Anthony Stuempfig Antiques  
Mahogany  
Philadelphia Museum of Art Craftsman File, Charles H. White



*Figure 2.11: Box sofa, Charles H. White, c. 1825-35, Philadelphia  
Property of Joseph Sorger, Philadelphia PA*

*Mahogany*

*The Joseph Sorger Collection, 10-5-2009, Freeman's Auctioneers & Appraisers, 15*





*Figure 2.12:* Box sofa, Charles H. White c. 1824-35, Philadelphia  
Arlington, Natchez, MS  
Southern Export  
Mahogany

Busch, "Furniture Patronage in Antebellum Natchez," 813





Figure 2.13: Sofa, attributed to Charles H. White. c. 1827, Philadelphia  
Private Collection  
Mahogany  
Boor, *Philadelphia Empire Furniture*, 358



*Figure 2.14: Sofa, attributed to Charles H. White, c. 1827, Philadelphia  
Private Collection  
Mahogany  
Boor, *Philadelphia Empire Furniture*, 357*



*Figure 2.15:* Sofa, attributed to Anthony Quervelle, 1825-1830, Philadelphia  
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA  
Gift of Mrs. Adelaide Workman Denny, 1957  
Mahogany  
[www.philamuseum.org](http://www.philamuseum.org)



*Figure 2.16:* Buffet, Charles H. White, c. 1857, Philadelphia  
Springfield Plantation, Fort Mill, SC  
Originally owned by Andrew Baxter Springs  
Southern Export  
Mahogany  
Photo by Author





*Figure 2.17:* Sideboard, Charles H. White c. 1857, Philadelphia  
Springfield Plantation, Fort Mill, SC  
Originally owned by Andrew Baxter Springs  
Southern Export  
Mahogany  
Photo by Author



*Figure 2.18:* Lion's paw foot on buffet, Charles H. White, c. 1857, Philadelphia  
Springfield Plantation, Fort Mill, SC  
Originally owned by Andrew Baxter Springs  
Southern Export  
Mahogany  
Photo by Author



*Figure 2.19:* Pineapple detail on buffet, Charles H. White, c. 1857, Philadelphia  
Springfield Plantation, Fort Mill, SC  
Originally owned by Andrew Baxter Springs  
Southern Export  
Mahogany  
Photo by Author



*Figure 2.20: Dressing Table, Charles H. White, c. 1824-1835, Philadelphia  
Arlington Plantation, Natchez MS  
Historic Natchez Foundation  
Southern Export  
Mahogany  
Busch, "Such a Paradise Can be Made on Earth: Furniture Patronage and  
Consumption in Antebellum Natchez, Mississippi, 1828-1863, fig. 69*





*Figure 2.21:* Sideboard, attributed to Charles H. White, c. 1840, Philadelphia  
Springfield Plantation, Fort Mill, SC  
Originally owned by Andrew Baxter Springs  
Southern Export  
Mahogany  
Photo by Author



*Figure 2.22:* Arm chair, Charles H. White, c. 1857, Philadelphia  
Springfield Plantation, Fort Mill, SC  
Originally owned by Andrew Baxter Springs  
Southern Export  
Mahogany  
Photo by Author



*Figure 2.23:* Splat, sidechair, Charles H. White, c. 1857, Philadelphia  
Springfield Plantation, Fort Mill, SC  
Originally owned by Andrew Baxter Springs  
Southern Export  
Mahogany  
Photo by Author



*Figure 2.24:* Sidechair, attributed to John Ferris White, c. 1825, Philadelphia  
Doyle New York Sale 12AN01-Lot 1546  
Stenciled label “JF WHITE” and  
other label: “made for the home of Michael Earl Newbold, Johnstown, NJ,  
1825”  
Mahogany  
[www.doylenewyork.com](http://www.doylenewyork.com)





*Figure 2.25 Plate 9*  
John Taylor, *The Upholsterer's and Cabinet Maker's*  
*Pocket Assistant* (London: Edward Lumley, 1825)  
Winterthur Library

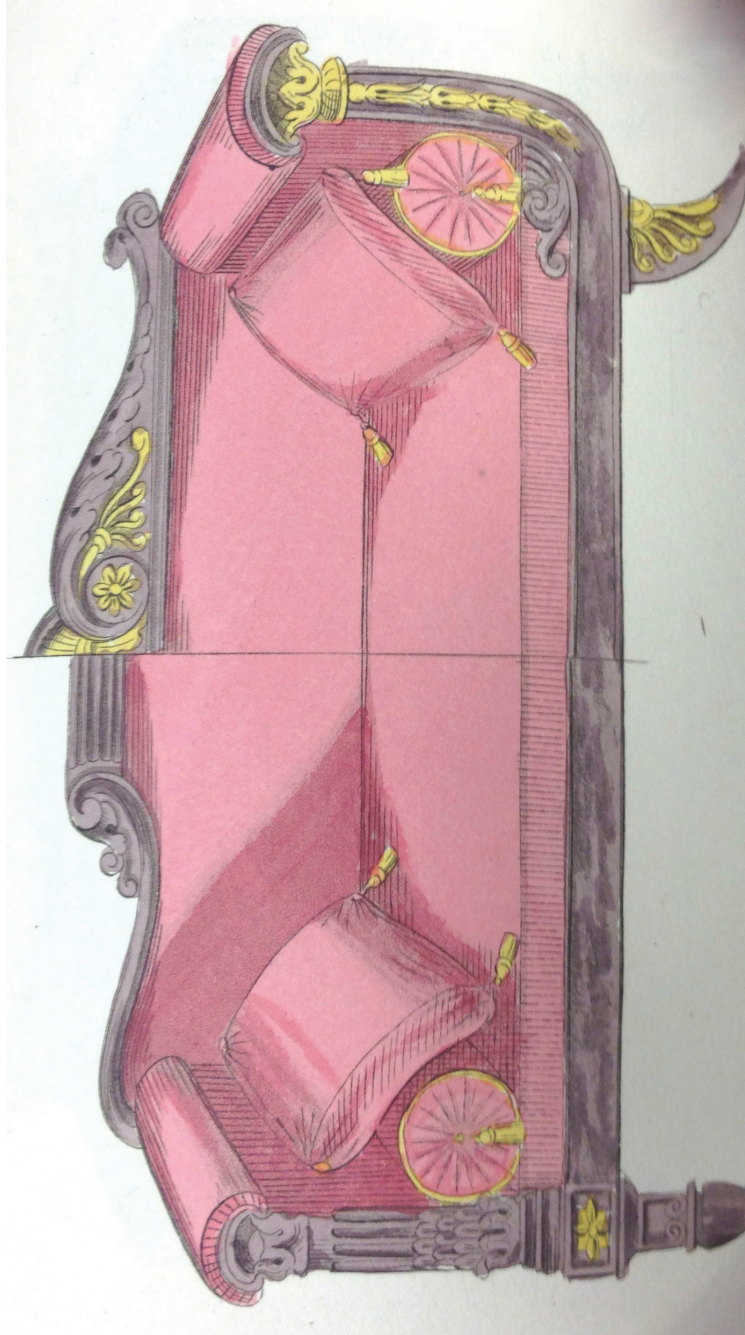


Figure 2.26 Plate 46  
John Taylor, *The Upholsterer's and Cabinet Maker's Pocket Assistant* (London: Edward Lumley, 1825)  
Winterthur Library

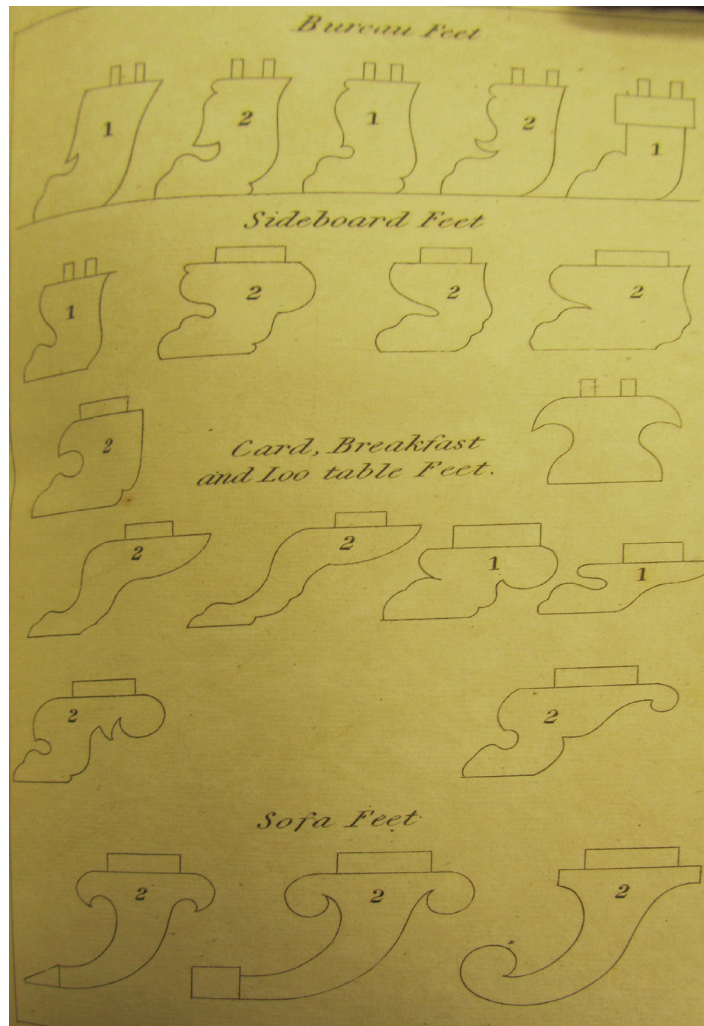
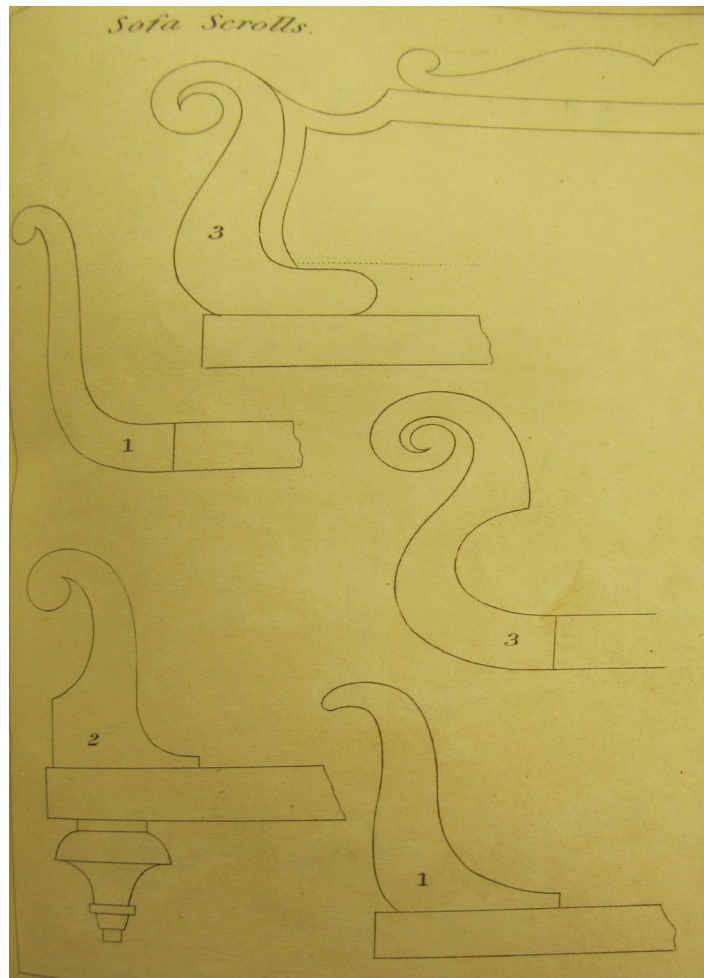


Figure 2.27 Plate 3  
*The Philadelphia Cabinet and Chair Makers' Union Book of Prices for  
 Manufacturing Cabinet Ware*, (Philadelphia: William Staveland, 1828)  
 Winterthur Library





*Figure 2.28 Plate 6, "Sofa Scrolls"*  
*The Philadelphia Cabinet and Chair Makers' Union Book of Prices for*  
*Manufacturing Cabinet Ware, (Philadelphia: William Stavely, 1828)*  
 Winterthur Library





*Figure 2.29: Oakwood, c. 1854, Burlington Co., NJ*  
HABS, [www.memory.loc.gov](http://www.memory.loc.gov)



*Figure 2.30: Stairhall, c. 1854, Oakwood, Burlington Co., NJ*  
HABS, [www.memory.loc.gov](http://www.memory.loc.gov)



*Figure 2.31:* Library, c. 1854, Oakwood, Burlington Co., NJ  
HABS, [www.memory.loc.gov](http://www.memory.loc.gov)



*Figure 2.32:* Second floor stairhall, c. 1854, Oakwood, Burlington Co., NJ  
HABS, [www.memory.loc.gov](http://www.memory.loc.gov)

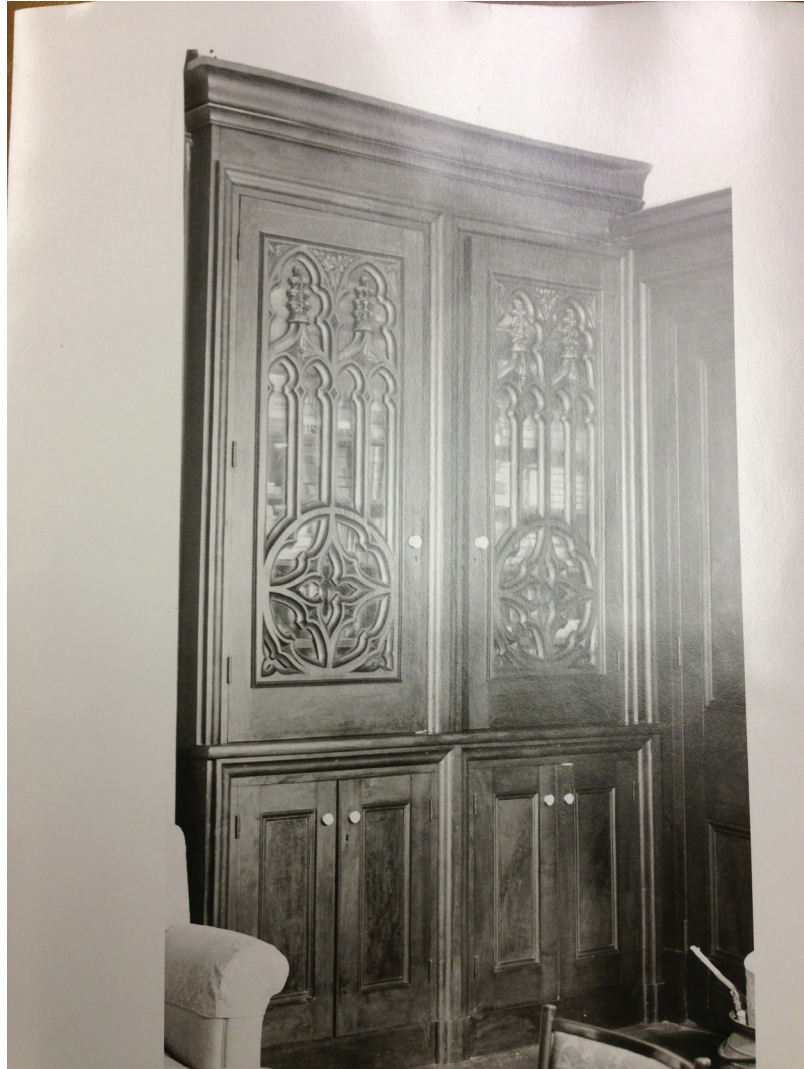




*Figure 2.33:* First floor stairhall, c. 1854, Oakwood, Burlington Co., NJ  
HABS, [www.memory.loc.gov](http://www.memory.loc.gov)



*Figure 2.34:* Detail of newell post, c. 1854, Oakwood, Burlington Co., NJ  
HABS, [www.memory.loc.gov](http://www.memory.loc.gov)



*Figure 2.35:* Bookcase, attributed to Charles H. White, 1854, Philadelphia  
Oakwood, Burlington Co., NJ  
Originally owned by Michael Earl & Rebecca White Newbold  
Mahogany  
Decorative Arts Photographic Collection Acc. No: 81.1670





*Figure 2.36:* Arm Chair, attributed to Charles H. White, c. 1855, Philadelphia  
Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY  
Gift of Louise G. Zabriskie  
Rosewood, original upholstery  
[www.brooklynmuseum.org](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org)



*Figure 2.37:* Slipper Chair, attributed to Charles H. White, c. 1855, Philadelphia  
Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY  
Gift of Louise G. Zabriskie  
Rosewood, original upholstery  
[www.brooklynmuseum.org](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org)



*Figure 2.38: Tête-à-Tête* , attributed to Charles H. White, c. 1855, Philadelphia  
Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY  
Gift of Louise G. Zabriskie  
Rosewood, original upholstery  
[www.brooklynmuseum.org](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org)



*Figure 2.39: Revolving Sofa, attributed to Charles H. White, c. 1850, Philadelphia  
Lot 390, Louisiana Purchase Auction  
Robert McCandlish Jones, CSA, First VA Regiment  
Rosewood and walnut  
[www.nealauction.com](http://www.nealauction.com)*





*Figure 2.40: Tête-à-Tête*, attributed to Charles H. White, c. 1850-55, Philadelphia  
Melrose Plantation, Natchez, MS  
Mahogany  
<http://here4now.typepad.com/here4now/2012/06/melrose-estate.html>



*Figure 2.41: Sofa table, White, Upholstery and Furniture Bazaar, 16  
Athenaeum of Philadelphia  
Captioned as: "This cut represents a Sofa Table, of the Renaissance Style, the  
design being carried out very full in its finish"  
Also in The Crystal Palace Exhibition;*





*Figure 2.42: Wall chair, White, *Upholstery and Furniture Bazaar*, 18, Athenaeum of Philadelphia*

Captioned as: "This represents a Wall Chair of the Elizabethan syle, full in its finish, and of very graceful patterns"

*Also in *The Crystal Palace Exhibition; illustrated catalogue*, London, 1851, 160*



*Figure 2.43: Tête-à-Tête , White, Upholstery and Furniture Bazaar, 16  
Athenaeum of Philadelphia*

Captioned as: "This cut represents a Sofa Table, of the Renaissance Style, the design being carried out very full in its finish"

*Also in The Crystal Palace Exhibition; illustrated catalogue, London, 1851, 119*

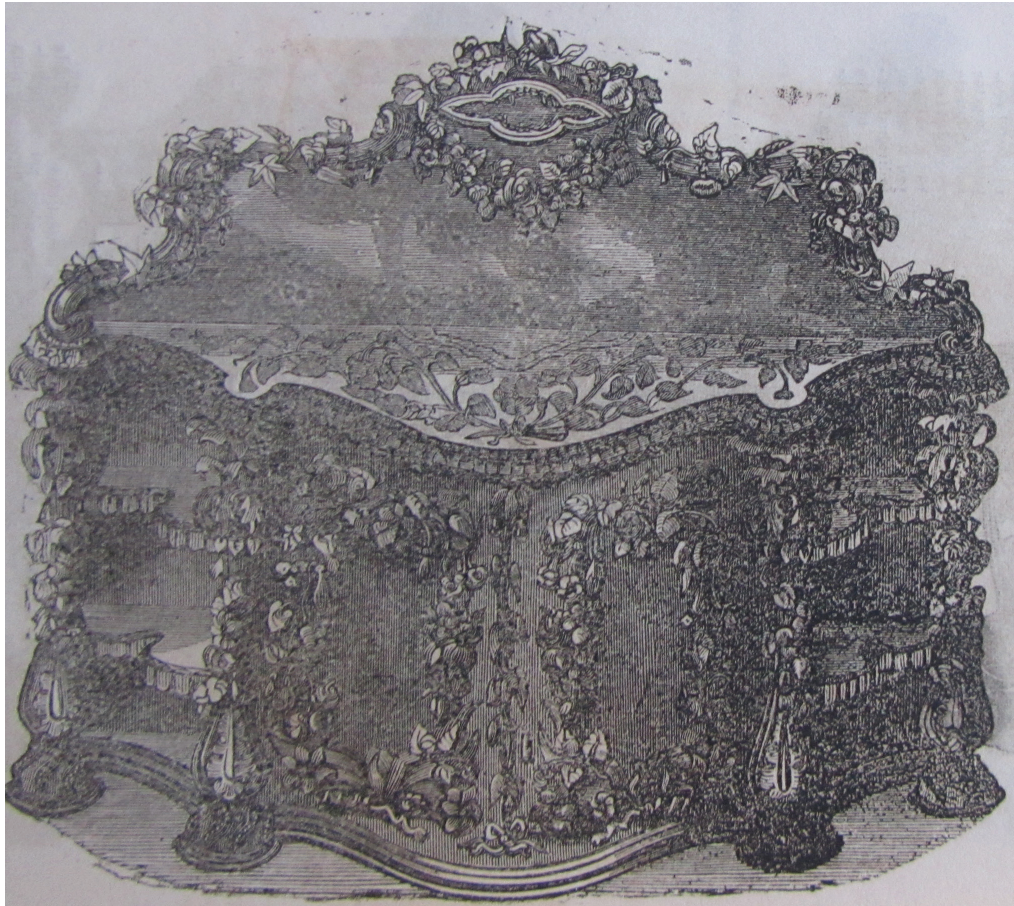




*Figure 2.44: Curule chair, White, *Upholstery and Furniture Bazaar*, 17  
Athenaeum of Philadelphia*

Captioned as: "This represents Curule Chair, and is a really fine peice of workmanship, graceful in its general forms, and enriched by the ornamentof the best period of Gre-  
cian taste of when decorative Art received from that wonderful people an impetus and  
an ultimate perfection which has stamped it with an individual character, of the most  
unmistakable kind"

*Also in *The Crystal Palace Exhibition; illustrated catalogue*, London, 1851, 323*



*Figure 2.45: Sideboard, White, Upholstery and Furniture Bazaar, 18  
Athenaeum of Philadelphia*

Captioned as: "This represents one of these pieces of art which pleases the eye, and take the fancy at all times, the back and in part is intended to be inlaid with fine glass plate, enriched by carved floriated ornaments of 'cunning workmanship,' in the Italian style, and when carried out in finish makes the liveliest apperance."  
Also in *The Crystal Palace Exhibition; illustrated catalogue, London, 1851, 79*





*Figure 2.46: Sidechair, White, 15, Upholstery and Furniture Bazaar,  
Athenaeum of Philadelphia*

Captioned as: "The forgoing represents an Arm Chair of the German Gothic style of the Middle  
Ages, and is very worthily of represented by our designer "

*Also in The Crystal Palace Exhibition;  
illustrated catalogue, London, 1851, 291*

## CHAPTER THREE | BUSINESS & LOCAL PATRONS

Although a large quantity of Charles H. White's business came from domestic trade to the southern states, like all Philadelphia cabinetmakers, he relied heavily on patronage of a local clientele. Like the southern aristocrats who purchased White's furniture, his wealthy Philadelphia customers often appreciated fine furniture. Philadelphians were the "most important" clients for a number of reasons.<sup>64</sup> As Philadelphia was one of the most populated cities in the United States, the high numbers of people shopping in town was larger than those who purchased exported furniture from the city. White was one of many merchant-artisans in Philadelphia whose products were shipped and sold in all parts of the country.

In the 19th century the renowned Philadelphia furniture industry produced premier furniture wares in America. The state of the industry in Philadelphia the first half of the 19th century is best described in *Public Ledger* from March 27th, 1839:

"... the many extensive establishments in this City, at which elegant furniture of almost every variety and pattern may be obtained, and at prices as reasonable as in any other city in the world. Indeed, Philadelphia is particularly favored in this manner embracing as she does within her limits more cabinetware establishments of a superior class, and where strangers and citizens may obtain every article suitable to ornament or prove useful in a private residence, than may be found in any city in the Union. Second Street below Dock and Walnut above Third, possess a large number of these furnishing warerooms and of a character every way praiseworthy..."<sup>65</sup>

### Business

Charles H. White's career as a cabinetmaker officially began seven years after he moved to the city in 1818. He opened up his first shop at 42 North Seventh Street between Church Street and Arch Street. Only staying in that location for one year. He

64. Deborah Ducoff-Barone, *The Early Industrialization of the Philadelphia Furniture Trade, 1800-1840* Diss. University of Pennsylvania, 1980, 141.

65. "Rich and Elegant Furniture" in *Public Ledger*, Vol. VI, Issue 155, Page 2, 27-3-1839.



then moved a few doors down to 33 North Seventh Street. White employed six men in his shop in 1820. By 1825, he had moved closer to the commercial center of the city to 169 Walnut Street. The earliest of White's labeled pieces to survive came from this workshop. Between 1825 and 1828, he rented a wareroom from looking glass maker John Elliott and moved east to 109 Walnut Street.<sup>66</sup> Most likely, White lived and worked in the same location until 1831. From 1819 to 1831, the City Directory entries list only one address for White, 33 North 7<sup>th</sup> Street (1819-1824), 169 Walnut Street (1825) and 109 Walnut Street (1828-1830).

After 1831, both White's commercial and residential addresses are listed, meaning that he no longer lives and works in the same space. Being able to maintain two separate address alludes to a successful and lucrative business. Ducoff-Barone's research reveals that the most common type of workshop for furniture makers was "a square or rectangular building....simply a workshop" that "were always located on the rear of a lot behind a rowhouse" before 1830.<sup>67</sup> Before machine made furniture took precedence, the cabinetmaking shops functioned much as they had in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>68</sup>

Throughout the 1830s and 1840s, White's thriving wareroom and studio occupied two storefronts after he bought 107 Walnut Street, just one door east, from hanging paper manufacturer Anthony Chardon.<sup>69</sup> For the most part, the architecture and cabinet warerooms did not vary. Most of furniture makers, especially those who conducted business in the lower parts of Chestnut and Walnut Streets, occupied traditional Philadelphia rowhomes, one room wide and two rooms deep.<sup>70</sup> The first room was typically the wareroom, showcasing the cabinetmaker's products. If needed, cabinetmakers accommodated "the reorganization of production, the growth in the number of men working in a shop, and the increase in supply furniture."<sup>71</sup> At least until

1840, White and his employees continued to use traditional techniques and hand tools;

66. "Charles H. White," craftsman file, Philadelphia Museum of Art, accessed 2-6-2013.

67. Ducoff-Barone, 89.

68. Ibid., 56.

69. *The Philadelphia Directory and Stranger's Guide*, (Philadelphia: Robert Desilver, 1825), 271.

70. Ducoff-Barone, 89.

71. Ibid., 88.

they were not yet dependent on steam-powered machines.<sup>72</sup>

## Apprentices & Foremen

His business expanded drastically at the end of the 1820s. He quadrupled the number of journeymen, apprentices and foremen to twenty-four by 1830.<sup>73</sup> Most of the names of these men have been lost. However, two, aside from those who took him to court in 1838, stand as skilled craftsmen as well. In 1831, White submitted a sideboard to the Franklin Institute's American Manufacturer's Exposition, which won an honorable mention. He credited his foreman, David H. Bell, for the work.<sup>74</sup> Bell was loyal and close to both White and his brother during his tenure at the workshop. During the 1838 trial, Bell testified stating that the Whites were "respectable" and believed the apprentices were "all treated well so far as I know."<sup>75</sup> He married White's sister-in-law, Ann Stockton, and remained a cabinetmaker well into the 1870s.<sup>76</sup> About the same time Bell worked for White, he also employed Thomas H. Moore who later became a partner of Moore & Campion, "one of the largest and most successful furniture firms at mid-century."<sup>77</sup>

This drastic expansion in employees in the 1840s justified the move to a double-façaded building. Since White's wareroom and workshop were situated in the core of the central business district, the building's aesthetic was attractive in order to entice patrons into his store instead of his competitors'. Unless clients were returning customers, people shopping on Chestnut or Walnut Street probably based their choices of furniture patronage on which merchant had the most attractive storefront and wares

72. Ibid., 30.

73. *Fourth Census of Manufacturing for 1820*, (Philadelphia: A Cornman, 1820).

74. *Report of the Seventh Annual Exhibition of the Franklin Institute of the State of Pennsylvania for the Promotion of the Mechanic Arts*, (Philadelphia: J. Harding, 1831), 9.

75. "We Give Our Readers to-Day the following Report of the Trial between the Messrs White," *Public Ledger*, Vol. 1, Issue 104, 7-25-1836.

76. 1870 United States Federal Census. Philadelphia Ward 10 District 29, Philadelphia County, PA: US Census Bureau, pg. 301a, From Ancestry.com, *1870 United States Federal Census* [database online], Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operation, Inc., 2009 (accessed 3/14/2013).

77. Page Talbott, "The Philadelphia Furniture Industry 1850 to 1880," (PhD. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1980): 157.

displayed. White owned one of twenty-six warerooms in the eastern part of the city near Market, Chestnut and Walnut Streets, thus he was not the only supplier of furniture to Philadelphians.<sup>78</sup> He, like others in the business “relied on the building itself to attract customers.”<sup>79</sup>

## John Ferris White

The most poignant change in White’s business, however, was the addition of his brother, John Ferris White (1807-c. 1852). Little information can be found on JF White, but he was probably a business partner or secondary head rather than a cabinetmaker. Since Charles White had already professionally established himself professionally by the time his brother moved to Philadelphia, JF White could have learned the trade from his brother, although indenture records do not suggest this. The exact year that JF White joined the business is unknown. Perhaps 1828, though there is no clear evidence to support this claim.<sup>80</sup> The earliest documented evidence of John Ferris White is a receipt to James Skerrett in 1831. However, he begins to appear in Philadelphia city directories in 1839 as “CH & JF White, cabinetmakers.”<sup>81</sup> There are, however many instances of Charles H. White being the primary or sole cabinetmaker throughout directories, labels and receipts during the 1820s, 1830s and 1840s.<sup>82</sup> Only one piece of furniture or documentation suggests that JF White had his hand in the creative efforts individually.

A side chair in the Classical style bears the label of “JF WHITE,” presumably John

78. Ducoff-Barone, 87.

79. Ibid., 92.

80. In William C. Ketchum’s *American Cabinetmakers: Marked American Furniture: 1640-1940*, he states that Charles H. and John F. White’s practiced together between 1828 and 1851. Anthony Stumpfieg also suggests this in research presented in *Philadelphia: Three Centuries of American Art*, published in 1976. The assumption is that JF White work with his brother throughout his entire tenure at 109/7 Walnut Street and the starting dates of their partnership most likely spurs from the fact that White, according to Philadelphia city directories, moved to 109 Walnut Street and purchased the neighboring buildings, 107 Walnut Street in 1828. Any labels or stamps that mention JF White also bear the address of 109 and/or 107 Walnut Street.

81. *McElroy’s Philadelphia City Directory*, (Philadelphia: A. McElroy & Co., 1839), 271.

82. Between 1828 and 1835, only Charles H. White appears a cabinetmaker at 109 Walnut Street and a majority of Skerrett receipts are from Charles H. White. Moreover, his calling card from 109 Walnut Street lists him as the owner of “Cabinet Warerooms” and his paper labels read “Charles H. White/Cabinet and Chair Manufacturer/ No. 109/ Walnut Street/Philadelphia.”

Ferris White with a note attached that reads “made for the home of Michael Earl Newbold, Johnstown, NJ, 1825 (fig. 2.24)”.<sup>83</sup> Given the family connection, the theory that “JF WHITE” is indeed John Ferris White seems plausible, though there are some discrepancies to disprove this postulation.<sup>84</sup>

## 250 Chestnut Street

It appears that JF White died around 1851 or 1852, as he stopped appearing in city directories completely. 1852 is also the year that Charles H. White moved to 250 Chestnut Street. The most visual and documentary evidence survives this workshop regarding its situation around the time of White’s occupation. Though published a year before he moved to 250 Chestnut Street, Julio Rae’s *Philadelphia Pictorial Directory and Panoramic Advertiser* documents the Chestnut Street streetscape as it appeared in 1851 (fig. 3.1). Situated between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Streets on the south side of Chestnut Street and three doors from the Joseph Sims mansion, 250 Chestnut Street, was a three-and-half-story, three-bay building, with an entryway on the west side of the property and identical to the building directly to the east.<sup>85</sup>

When White moved to this space, the downgraded in size, reducing his space from a double-façade building to a single. However, the move to Chestnut Street upgraded him in status and geographic position. His wareroom and shop were then located on the most fashionable shopping corridor in the country. Moving to renowned Chestnut Street meant more foot traffic and overall exposure. As early as 1836, Chestnut

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83. “Classical Carved Mahogany Side Chair” Doyle New York Doyle, Sale 12AN01-Lot 1546, <http://www.doylenewyork.com/asp/fullCatalogue.asp?salelot=12AN01++1546+&refno=++885239>, accessed 16-2-2013.

84. JF White quite possibly could have made this chair in the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century while he was an apprentice or partner. However, the chair could have been in the house, but was certainly not made for “Oakwood,” the home of Michael Earl Newbold, given the fact that the Newbold was born in 1824 and constructed his home in the 1850s. It is also telling that Newbold opted to furnish his house with Rococo Revival and Gothic Revival furniture, so the chances of Classical furniture, unless heirlooms, being in the house is unlikely.

85. Julio Rae, *Philadelphia Pictorial Directory and Panoramic Advertiser* (Philadelphia, 1851), pl. 16tpl. 15b, <http://www.brynmawr.edu/iconog/panos/panotab2.html> www.brynmawr.edu/iconog/panospanotab2.html.

Street had already garnered national attention as one of the foremost commercial corridors in the country. *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine* writes:

“On such a day as those of which we have been speaking, a stroll along Chestnut Street is really delightful... The public buildings scattered at intervals along its whole extent –the shady avenue in front of the venerable State House, the fancy stores piled with cumbrous heaps of the richest merchandise- the shops of the jewelers glittering with gold and precious stones- the windows of the print sellers filled with the most beautiful productions of the graver- the numerous hotels and places of amusement- all contribute to make it a grand and ceaseless thoroughfare, and to cover its pavements with constant crowds of passengers.”<sup>86</sup>

It is important to note at this time, women were beginning to make decisions regarding household furnishings and fashions, and the kinds of stores found on Chestnut Street, whether furniture manufactories, upholsteries, fabrics or furs, were meant to attract women.<sup>87</sup>

The structures lining Chestnut Street were originally built as residential properties dating from the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century or earlier. As the street transitioned from residential to commercial, by about 1850, these dwellings were converted into shops and stores to accommodate new tenants.<sup>88</sup> Judging from the 1851 view of White's shop, such was the case at number 250. That year, 250 Chestnut Street was the residence of John C. Davis, a lumber merchant who worked at 10<sup>th</sup> and Callowhill.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, comparing this address to 248 Chestnut Street, CN Robinson's Looking Glass showroom and manufacture, the latter's composition is that of a commercial structure, equipped with a large glass window, signage and an awning bearing his name.

250 Chestnut Street was larger than the average furniture-maker occupied space. The street frontage for a rowhome in this part of town was slightly narrow, typically 14 feet to 15 ½ feet., while the depth ranged from 28 feet to 42 feet. A surviving document

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86. “Editor's Table,” *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine* (May 1836), 240.

87. Sarah Leigh Jones, “A Grand and Ceaseless Thoroughfare”: The Social and Cultural Experience of Shopping on Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, 1820-1860 (MA Thesis, University of Delaware, 2008), 55.

88. Jones, 15.

89. *McElroy's Philadelphia City Directory*, (Philadelphia: A. McElroy & Co., 1851), 96.



describing his workshop states the dimensions as “25’ front/45’ deep/piazza 11x11/sitting on 18x21/12x31 back bldgs/all three stories high.”<sup>90</sup> 250 Chestnut Street may have had new, state-of-the-art machinery to expedite the furniture making process. 1850 is said to be the “beginning of full mechanization of the furniture industry...when the most heavily carved of Victorian objects were becoming popular.”<sup>91</sup> Given White’s status and wealth, mechanization may have been a part of his workshop. However, most machinery used was strictly for turning and not for carving, which was not prevalent or mainstream until the end of the 19th century.<sup>92</sup>

## Final Years & Retirement

White’s time at 250 Chestnut Street was short-lived. He moved in 1857, the same year he decided to retire from the trade. By the end of that year, White issued an advertisement in *The Press* attempting to sell his remaining wares due to him opting to “declining business.”<sup>93</sup> A year later, he moved to 333 Walnut Street, which remained his office until he died. After he retired in 1857, he appeared four more times in the city directories as a cabinetmaker, but the remainder of the years he listed as either a gentleman or broker. After his retirement, his grandson, Charles H. White, Jr., attempted to run his grandfather’s business. However, he only appeared in city directories as a cabinetmaker in 1861.<sup>94</sup> When Charles H. White died, he owned limited furnishings in his Walnut Street office. His tools, probably long retired, were listed as being stored in the third floor garrett.<sup>95</sup> The remaining years of his life he spent as “gentleman” or retired from the trade, while still retaining his connections to

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90. “Charles H. White,” craftsman file, Philadelphia Museum of Art, accessed 2-6-2013.

91. Michael J. Ettema, “Technological Innovation and Design Economics in Furniture Manufacture,” in *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 16, No. 2/3 (Summer-Autumn, 1981):201.

92. Ettema, 201.

93. “Superior and Elegant Cabinet Furniture,” *The Press*, Vol. 1, Issue 117, Pg. 3, 12-16-1857.

94. McElroy’s Philadelphia City Directory, (Philadelphia: A. McElroy & Co., 1861),1054. There were also two Charles H. White, Jrs. The first, Charles H. White’s son, died when he was 20 years old in 1848. The second was his grandson, who he bequeathed his hunting guns and Franklin Institute silver medals to when he died. The latter Charles H. White, Jr.

95. “Will of Charles H. White,” 4 September 1876, Registrar of Wills, City of Philadelphia.

Philadelphia's commercial and social communities.

## Charles H. White's Trade Catalog

As his career progressed, conducting business on Chestnut Street was an ideal situation for Charles H. White. Furniture warerooms were scattered all around the core of the city, but Chestnut Street proved to be the location where the most expensive wares sold.<sup>96</sup> By 1854, White was fully conscious and confident of his status in the cabinetmaking industry. No other document displays this amount of assurance than in his trade catalog. This publication exemplified the essence of his latter years and commercially. White opens the catalog with an introduction describing his well-deserved status as a premiere and respectable member of Philadelphia's commercial realm. He stated that "The well known ability of this Establishment...needs no additional recommendation at this time; it is already known by its regular customers of thirty-five years' experience, who are daily attesting to the goodness of workmanship, and beauty of style, that always characterises (sic) its productions."<sup>97</sup> It was for these very reasons that White thought that his comparatively steep prices were warranted. He was "conscientious in his rates, having regard to quality and price, that no person shall have cause to complain of any undue charge being made..."<sup>98</sup>

White provided his customers with explanations and historical background of the types of styles in which he worked. He assumed that his clients would be not only concerned with the aesthetics of his furniture and their placements within the home, but also the scholarly reasoning for choosing a particular style. For those that were not as familiar with the latest domestic trends, White offered the style essay from the 1851 Crystal Palace Exposition Illustrated (find correct name), the preeminent text on style of the day that would allow them to decide "the best mode for them to come to a correct conclusion, and assist them in making selections for FURNISHING."<sup>99</sup> He thought it was

96. Talbott, 72.

97. White.

98. Ibid.

99. Ibid.

necessary for him and for his clients to understand the context of the styles, which in turn would cultivate a deeper understanding and appreciation for the work he produced.

## Advertisements

The local buyer allowed Charles H. White to flourish as a well-known purveyor of furniture wares. As early as 1823, White advertised in a number of daily papers and advertisers in Philadelphia. Unless a Southern visitor happened upon one of these publications, it is likely that they would have never seen White's advertisements. Subscribers to newspapers and pamphlets, like *Poulson's Daily Advertiser* and *The American*, the majority of whom were Philadelphians, could be kept up-to-date with manufacturers' and merchants' goods for sale throughout the city. When White placed advertisements in these papers, they were intended for Philadelphian consumption. These advertisements White's follow the typical formula of 19<sup>th</sup> century advertisements, using the usual vocabulary that includes words like 'latest' 'most fashionable' or 'superior,' but never names the particular styles in which the furniture was made and addressed the wares in stock rather than strictly advertising their business. White's first advertisement in *Poulson's* in 1823 is a laundry list of already-made furniture for sale rather than a promotion for custom-made furniture. The advertisement states that White had "on Hand, Several pieces highly finished Cabinet Furniture...warranted not to be excelled in the city" including:

"a large Sideboard, nine feet long, with Italian Marble Top, and Looking Glass set in the back ,with an open centre, arched in front, varnished, polished very highly.

One French secretary of a corresponding finish. A Pier table, four feet long, two feet wide, top white Italia Marble, a large Looking Glass Plate in the back, decorated with the French Gilt Ornaments, uncommonly set. A Patent Sliding Dining Table, to draw out 16 feet, with loose leaves complete, of solid Mahogany."<sup>100</sup>

It was imperative for craftsmen in the furniture industry in the early 1820s to distinguish

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100. Advertisement, *Poulson's Daily Advertiser*, p. 2, 1-2-1823.

their goods because of differences with contrast between cabinetmakers and chair makers. Early in his career, judging from both advertisements and existing pieces, White primarily made sofas and cabinetware rather than chairs. If he had built chairs during this period, his advertisements would have reflected that production.<sup>101</sup>

Throughout the beginning of the 1830s, White continued to advertise his furniture in publications like *Poulson's*. However, sometime as early as 1838, he began to offer upholstery, a service that he continued at least until 1854, along with “a very extensive assortment of furniture.”<sup>102</sup> Finally, by 1846, White promotes his capabilities to produce “orders to any extent in every style in Fashion, or to any choice of Taste.”<sup>103</sup> This statement reinforces that buyers wanted the option of late Classical, early Rococo Revival or Gothic Revival furniture, and that White could satisfy their wants. Of the known pieces in White's in the Gothic Revival style, all of them were made for owners in Philadelphia or the surrounding area. Suggesting that he can make custom orders during the pivotal time in the evolution of styles within the decorative arts and when eclecticism was setting in was essential. By this time, White was well known as a premier craftsmen of Empire or Classical furniture. With the advent of Rococo Revival and Gothic Revival styles, he had to ensure clients, both returning and new, that he could tend to their domestic needs.

In conjunction with posting advertisements, merchants expected locals to come into their store to purchase goods directly because, as Dr. Deborah Ducoff-Barone points out, “the best way to achieve regularity in sales was to maintain daily hours of business in the wareroom so that a sale could be transacted at any time of day.”<sup>104</sup> Furniture consumption in Philadelphia functioned more as retail rather than special order or custom production.

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101. Ducoff-Barone, 146.

102. *Pennsylvania Inquirer*, 4/16/1838. His 1854 trade catalog is entitled *Charles H. White Upholster and Furniture Bazaar*

103. *Directory of Philadelphia Manufacturers* (Philadelphia: H. Orr, 1846).

104. Ducoff-Barone, 143.

## Local Clientele

Through this type of business White gained customers in the form of wealthy Philadelphians. Throughout the duration of his career, White's furniture attracted affluent members of society in both the local and southern markets. His trade catalog accounts for patrons who are fortunate enough to have heated homes, stating that he could provide "all the late style of French Furniture, got up to stand this climate and heated rooms, better than the imported."<sup>105</sup> Although he was a just as skilled as other craftsmen like Quervelle or Barry, White's popularity as a supplier of high-end furniture to Philadelphia's elite most likely did not completely lie in the workmanship and quality of his furniture. His strong social ties within the city through outlets like the Franklin Institute, Central Savings Association and the Philadelphia Common Council also undoubtedly benefited his business.<sup>106</sup> Unfortunately, it is more difficult to track all of White's local sales than it is for his Southern exports. To determine his Southern clients, one is able to consult Outward Coastal Manifests repository to see where exactly White shipped goods. To gain an understanding of particular Philadelphia patrons, provenances, receipts and other primary documents are the only evidence in existence to precisely inform scholars on his consumers. Nonetheless, the few names that do surface through research into Delaware Valley patrons are among some of the most prominent surnames of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Philadelphia.

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105. White, 21.

106. The Central Savings Association was an early 19<sup>th</sup> century financial institution located at 74 South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. White was a director, as was fellow cabinetmakers William Fling and Anthony Quervelle. *A McElroy's Philadelphia Directory for 1837* (Philadelphia: Rackliff & Jones, 1837), 17. The Philadelphia Common Council was the precursor to City Council. According to Anthony Stuempfig's research, White was elected to the Philadelphia Common Council in 1833. Nessa Forman, "Who was C.H. White and Why Are They Buying His Work?" Philadelphia Museum of Art Craftsman file, Charles H. White.



## James J. Skerrett

One of White's premier Philadelphia clients was James J. Skerrett (1784-1875). As First Teller in the Philadelphia Bank and owner of Loudoun in Germantown, Skerrett either purchased furniture from White or hired him to assemble or disassemble furniture four times between 1826 and 1832.<sup>107</sup> Skerrett subscribed to *Poulson's Daily Advertiser* in the 1820s and 1830s and possibly saw White's advertisements.<sup>108</sup> In 1832, Skerrett purchased "1 Spring Seat Rocking Chair" for \$25.00 The spring-filled padded seat, introduced prior to 1830 in the United States, was "an innovation that introduced greater comfort" and it appears that the Skerrett chair is one of the earliest documented examples of this particular furniture type.<sup>109</sup> Moreover, there is no mention of any type of plush or spring seats in pricing guides for neither Spanish Chairs or Chairs sections the 1828 *Philadelphia Cabinet and Chair Makers' Union Book of Prices for Manufacturing Cabinet Ware*.

Skerrett also employed White's workshop on multiple occasions to move furniture seasonally from the Skerrett's townhomes on both South 10<sup>th</sup> Street (their primary residence before 1832) and Colonnade Row on Chestnut Street above 15<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>110</sup> In November of 1831, White moved a wardrobe from Loudoun to the Skerrett's townhome for Aside from the pianoforte makers Loud & Brother who moved the pianoforte from Loudoun into the city annually, White presumably was the only cabinetmaker Skerrett hired to move furniture between his homes in the 1830s.<sup>111</sup> The

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107. Mark Bower, "Loudoun Germantown, Philadelphia: The Country House of the Armat Family The Years 1801-1835" (MS Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1984) 56.

108. A number of receipts in the Loudoun collection at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania were for Skerrett's subscription to *Poulson's Daily Advertiser*. "Loudoun Collection, James J. Skerrett Papers, 1820-1825; 1826-1830; 1831-1835. Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

109. Nancy Goyne Evans, *American Windsor Furniture: Specialized Forms*, (Manchester, VT: Hudson Hill Press, 1997), 75. Evans also notes that William Hancock of Boston and Dorr and Allen sold spring-padded seats in 1829 and Edward Bulkley of New Haven in 1830. More importantly, Evan mentions that "the next year [1833] furniture warerooms in Providence and Washington, D.C. offered the new product.," affirming the fact that this type of chair was more of a one-of-a-kind product rather than a mass produced form.

110. Bower, 77.

111. Ibid., 14.

fact that Skerrett hired White multiple times meant that he was a trusted handler of the Skerretts' furniture. Providing these services also meant that White was able to establish a business outside of actually crafting furniture by performing one-time tasks like "hawling" furniture and installing shelves and things of that nature, thus establishing relationships with local patrons and garnering a regular customer base. Mr. William D. Lewis also hired White for "putting Shelves in a Wardrobe" in 1828.<sup>112</sup> However, Charles H. White was not the only cabinetmaker to the Skerrett family; James J. Skerrett also purchased bedsteads, chairs, tables, a wardrobe from other well-known Philadelphia craftsmen like Robert West, George Apple and William Fling.<sup>113</sup>

## David Sands Newbold

Along with White's prominence in Philadelphia society, his family connections also warranted a profitable market. Again, Charles H. White designed the interior woodwork for his daughter's house, Oakwood, in rural New Jersey. Twenty-seven years earlier, he provided a shipment of dining room and parlor furniture for his sister-in-law and brother-in-law, Sarah Stockton and David Sands Newbold. The Newbolds, who lived in Bordentown, New Jersey, most likely selected furniture from White's wareroom while visiting Philadelphia. They purchased one sofa, two bureaus, two dining tables, one washstand, one candle stand, one high post maple bed and an undetermined number of chairs, for a total of \$230.00.<sup>114</sup> This transaction occurred a year before the 1828 price book was published, White charged the Newbolds market prices despite their familial connections.<sup>115</sup>

The full extent of White's Philadelphia customers is not known because so

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112. Receipt, Charles H. White to William D. Lewis, 1828, William David Lewis Papers, 1792-1881, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

113. Skerrett Papers.

114. Decorative Arts Photographic Collection, Winterthur, DAPC Acc. No. 97.836.

115. The base prices for all of the different types of furniture were significantly lower than the prices noted on the Newbold receipts. Therefore, the furniture was most likely large, intricately detailed and filled with different motifs that cost extra.

little information on particular patrons exists. To be able to understand the size of his local market and social status of his customers, context helps suggest the type of clientele. White was able to afford rent or ownership in one of the poshest parts of town. Moreover, the fact that he moved towards the end of his career shows that his status grew from his beginnings on Walnut Street.

## The Steamboat New York

In 1827, White executed perhaps his only “public work.” The owners of the Steamboat New York, a passenger steamer that frequently traveled between Philadelphia and New York, employed White, along with the Messrs. Stewart and James of Walnut Street to install interior cabinetwork and seating furniture, respectively. The *United States Gazette* described the ship as “furnished in a style of elegance that does credit to the liberality of the proprietors and the workmanship of the several persons employed in its decoration and convenience.”<sup>116</sup> Not only was this a commission in large quantity, it allowed White to physically advertise his wares to people in large masses. Typically, advertising on this scale happened when cabinet or furniture makers supplied the wares for various hotels in the city.<sup>117</sup> But having his furniture and designs present in bulk not only meant Philadelphians came in contact with his products, but also New Yorkers and others commuting between the two cities. The fact White also only produced cabinetwork for the *Steamboat New York* enforces the fact that he excelled in cabinetry more so than seating furniture.

## Richard Rush

Richard Rush is another notable name in White’s client list. Son of Declaration

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116. “The Steamboat New York” in *United States Gazette*, 19-5-1827.

117. Jones, 73. *A Traveler’s Sketch: Continental Hotel, Philadelphia*, published in 1861 listed the names and addresses of suppliers for their furniture.

of Independence Signer Benjamin Rush, he was heavily involved in the politics of the new Republic.<sup>118</sup> He held positions in the federal government including Attorney General (in James Madison's cabinet) and Secretary of the Treasury under John Quincy Adams. His strong personal and social ties could have possibly meant that his domestic preferences would have continually stayed somewhat nostalgic and kept mostly to the Federal or early Classical persuasions. However, in 1853, he opted to update his furniture and purchased a pair of White's Rococo Revival armchairs, now in the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh (fig. 3.2). These richly carved oval-backed chairs are faux finished to appear as rosewood, the premier and most expensive wood of the time. These chairs also retain their original wool, block-printed floral upholstery, again a service that White promoted since the 1830s.

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118. For more information on Rush, see *Richard Rush, Republican Diplomat, 1780-1859* by J.H. Powell, 1942.



*Figure 3.1: 250 Chestnut Street in 1851*  
*Rae's Philadelphia Pictorial Directory and Panoramic Advertiser*  
pl. 16tpl. 15ba  
<http://www.brynmawr.edu/iconog/panos/panotab2.html>





*Figure 3.2:* Arm Chair, Charles H. White, c. 1853, Philadelphia  
Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA  
Originally owned by Richard Rush  
Rosewood, original upholstery  
<http://www.adafca.org/events/american-rococo-evolution-in-style/>



*Figure 3.3: Cover Plate, White, Athenaeum of Philadelphia  
Also in *The Crystal Palace Exhibition*;  
illustrated catalogue, London, 1851, p. 257*

## CHAPTER FOUR | SOUTHERN CLIENTELE

The southern aristocracy's patronage of Northern cabinetmakers was not an unusual concept. Southerners purchased furniture from New England and the mid-Atlantic as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>119</sup> Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries urban centers like Charleston, Savannah and New Orleans had a thriving cabinetmaking industries. Charleston craftsmen like Robert Walker and Thomas Elfe built furnishings that are sought after by collectors today. When the southern states focused economic endeavors on agriculture rather than manufacturing, artisans lost business. Many quit the furniture trade and moved out of the city and became planters. Those more dedicated and determined to stay in Charleston opened cabinet warehouses as a "profitable supplement," filled with Philadelphia and New York furniture.<sup>120</sup> After 1800, the number of warehoused, northern-made pieces of furniture far exceeded the locally-produced.<sup>121</sup> Southern aristocrats with luxurious tastes were forced to buy Northern furniture because the Southern furniture industry almost ceased to exist.

In 1830, Martha Keziah Peay of the Fairfield District of South Carolina (present day Columbia) wrote to Mrs. William Chaloner in Philadelphia, who was in charge of choosing furnishings to ship to Peay, that "the articles cannon be had here on as reasonable terms as in yr. city--& having so many articles to procure my Father says it will be an object with him to get them as reasonable as possible."<sup>122</sup> One reason for this, as furniture scholar John Bivins surmises, was that the stylistic trends were also

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119. Forsyth M. Alexander, "Cabinet Warehousing in the Southern Atlantic Ports, 1783-1820" *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts*, Vol. Xv, No. 2 (November, 1989): 3.

120. Alexander, 25. Also, for a thorough discussion of the furniture warehousing in Charleston in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a case study, please see "The Arrival of the Age of Warehousing: Charleston Neoclassical Case Furniture with British, Middle Atlantic and Regional Trends" in *The Furniture of Charleston, 1680-1820, Volume II: Neoclassical Furniture*, by Bradford Rauschenberg p. 554.

121. Bradford Rauschenberg, *The Furniture of Charleston, 1680-1820, Volume II: Neoclassical Furniture*, (Winston Salem: The Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, 2003), 865.

122. Martha Keziah Peay and Elizabeth D. English, "House Furnishings of the 1830's as Described in the Letters of Martha Keziah Peay" *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (Apr., 1942): 72, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27571697>, accessed 1/23/2013.

instrumental in the shift of industry to entirely the north. He states:

“In short, the stylistic shift to the Neoclassical carried with it new furniture forms, new technology, and a demand for more complex materials, all of which were better suited to the production of a specialized urban shop. That is one of the principal reasons why Boston, New York, and Philadelphia created serious competition for the southern cabinet trade after the Revolution.”<sup>123</sup>

In the first four decades of the nineteenth century, Charleston received 32% of all Philadelphia’s furniture shipments, New Orleans 14% and Savannah 14% (see fig. 4.1).<sup>124</sup> In the later part of this period, New Orleans (which, in turn, also meant Natchez because most furniture traveled up the Mississippi River to Natchez from the main port) started to see an upsurge of Philadelphia imports while Charleston decreased. By 1860, it was estimated that “Upwards of \$1,000,000 is received for furniture sold in the South each year.”<sup>125</sup> In total, furniture craftsmen, including chairmakers were responsible for 60% of all consignments on coastwise manifests between 1800 and 1840.<sup>126</sup> Philadelphia cabinetmakers, including White, also sent furniture to foreign ports. In 1827, White, along with fellow cabinetmaker Joseph B. Barry sent “a large shipment to Valparaiso (Chile) of 220 boxes, and 6 cases of furniture and 35 dozen chairs which they valued on the manifest at \$31, 428.33.”<sup>127</sup>

## Furniture Consumption in Charleston

The city of Charleston as a whole began to patronize almost strictly New York makers through warehousing by the 1830s. Firms like Deming and Bulkley opened showrooms where Charlestonians could purchase the finest New York-made furniture

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123. John Bivins, “A Catalog of Northern Furniture with Southern Provenances” *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts*, Vol. Xv, No. 2 (November, 1989):45.

124. Deborah Ducoff-Barone, “The Early Industrialization of the Philadelphia Furniture Trade, 1800-1840” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1980), 204.

125. Thomas Prentice Kettell, *Southern Wealth and Northern Profits* (New York: George W. and John A Wood, 1860), 65.

126. Ducoff-Barone, 206.

127. Ibid., 235.

without having to ship directly from the manufacturer.<sup>128</sup> However, in the late 1830s and early 1840s, Charles H. White sent shipments of furniture to various recipients in Charleston including two members of the Chisolm family and Dr. OB Irvine. It appears that R. Chisolm, who received “10 Boxes Furniture,” was the only one in this batch of patrons to not go through a commission merchant and possibly purchased his order while visiting Philadelphia.<sup>129</sup> M. Chisolm and OB Irvine\* went through two separate firms, R. Thurston and Milieu & Wallas, respectively.<sup>130</sup>

Therefore, there were two ways those in the South were able to acquire Philadelphia or New York furniture: through a warehouse or by actually visiting the shops themselves and purchasing goods directly from the manufacturer. Outward Coastal Manifests prove to be the best way to detect which purchase method consumers chose.<sup>131</sup> Wholesaling or consigning furniture in bulk was the most common way Philadelphia furniture was purchased in the south. However, this method also meant that the furniture maker was unable to control prices.<sup>132</sup> Also, if a piece is either labeled or stamped, like some of White’s sofas or cabinet furniture in Natchez, it probably went through a commission merchant and the label was meant to ensure that the consumer knew the maker. Nonetheless, high-end cabinetmakers like White saw the Southern market as crucial as the local. Moreover, the cost of coastal shipping was far less than overland shipping so it was more practical and inexpensive to ship furniture to the south

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128. Alexander, 25. For more on Deming & Bulkley, see “Beautiful Specimens, Elegant Patterns” by Maurie McInnis and Robert E. Leath in *American Furniture* edited by Lucas Beckerdite, 1996.

129. Manifest from Philadelphia to Charleston, March 15, 1839 Port of Philadelphia Outward Coastal Manifest, RG 36, Box 132, NC-154 Entry 1059.

130. Manifest from Philadelphia to Charleston, July 27, 1839 Port of Philadelphia Outward Coastal Manifest, RG 36, Box 132, NC-154 Entry 1059. Manifest from Philadelphia to Charleston, November 1, 1842 Port of Philadelphia Outward Coastal Manifest, RG 36, Box 136, NC-154 Entry 1059.

131. The author only consulted shipping manifests for the years 1818-1820 and 1839-1842 and secondary sources that also conducted similar shipping manifest research. To gain a better understanding of all of White’s Southern clientele, see shipping manifests for un-researched years (1821-1838).

132. Kathleen Catalano, “Cabinetmaking in Philadelphia 1820-1840” (MA Thesis, University of Delaware, 1972), 136.



rather than west.<sup>133</sup> Shipping costs were relatively inexpensive, thus the extra cost to the consumer, who was typically wealthy, was not an issue.<sup>134</sup>

## The Springfield Dining Room Suite

1857 saw one of the latest shipments of furniture to the South from White's workshop. In April of that year, Andrew Baxter Springs and his wife Blandina of York District, South Carolina visited White's Philadelphia wareroom, where, according to family tradition, "she [Blandina] found the latest styles of furniture. There were European sofas, tête-à-têtes, and etagers (sic). And there were so many beautiful dining tables she hardly knew which one to select. Finally, she chose a mahogany extension table which could seat sixteen people."<sup>135</sup> The Springs family was one of the wealthiest gentry planter families living in the upcountry of South Carolina before the Civil War. Son of John Springs III, "one of the wealthiest, most prominent, best respected, and most politically significant citizens of York District", Andrew Baxter Springs was a

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133. Ducoff-Barone, 192.

134. In 1856, George Henkels charged Mr. Samuel Rainey of York District, SC \$1.50 for "boxing" a walnut washstand valued at \$15.00. Andrew Baxter Springs' father John Springs III purchased \$204.50 worth of furniture from C. Schwazwaelder in New York with an \$8 shipping fee. Bratton Family Papers, University of South Carolina South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, SC. Springs Family Papers, 1772-1924, University of North Carolina Wilson Library, Chapel Hill, NC.

135. Katherine Wooten Springs, *The Squires of Springfield* (W Loftin, 1965), 167-8. Preservationist Lissa Felzer who has worked extensively with the Springs Family papers at Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina states: "I have been reading through the microfilm of the Springs' Family archives for many months and have also read the Katherine Wooten Springs' book, *The Squires of Springfield* multiple times during my research. As far as I can tell, Mrs. Springs utilized the family's archives consistently and accurately during her writing." Though the receipt does not survive in the archives collection, it could be in one of several boxes still in Katherine Wooten Springs' possession that have not yet been donated to any publically-accessed archive. The author was not able to recover any receipts while researching for this thesis from White's tenure at 250 Chestnut Street, but speculates that they were most likely printed, unlike his early receipts that were scraps of handwritten paper. The receipt probably had his address clearly displayed, which Springs notes in her prose and could have mentioned specifically "European sofas, tête-à-têtes and étagères," common and popular items of the time, similar to George Henkels printed receipts from the same time which note his 'patent extension dining tables.' Samuel Rainey, a member of the Bratton family also from York County, South Carolina, purchased a walnut washstand from Henkels in 1856 while in Philadelphia. *Bratton Family Papers*, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC.

significant figure in South Carolina history in his own right as one of the signers of the South Carolina Ordinance of Secession.<sup>136</sup> The Springs family produced generations of cotton planters throughout the 18th and 19th century. The family then went on to own a number of textile manufactories in South and North Carolina, which became Springmaid, one of the largest textile manufactories in the United States, second only to Cotton. The Springs family had personal connections to Philadelphia. Among other things, Andrew Baxter Springs' sister, Mary Laura Springs Davidson attended Miss Sarazin's School for Girls in Philadelphia.<sup>137</sup>

Along with the table and chairs, which have remained in the house, a matching sideboard and buffet (figs. 2.16-2.19 and 2.22-2.23) accompany them in the first floor south east room of Springfield Plantation. These pieces are not labeled, which is not an unusual aspect of furniture that was imported from a distant market. Labels were another mode of second-hand advertising and also meant that these particular pieces were under warranty. Thus, it would be irrelevant for the Springs family to have any type of warranty on their furniture, given their distance from the source.<sup>138</sup> White may not have purposefully labeled these pieces purposefully because when the Springses purchased them, it was only eight months before he officially "declined business."<sup>139</sup> There would be no reason for White to advertise to anyone in South Carolina at this time because he was not seeking new clients and was trying to liquidate his stock. The Springses also most likely did not custom order but rather selected pre-made furniture in White's wareroom and could have possibly gotten a reduced price through a "liquidation deal." The dining room suite is late-Classical, Empire in design. In the 1850s, Charles H. White was primarily working in either the Gothic Revival or Rococo Revival, having move on from the styles that jumpstarted his career. Because of this, the Springfield suite

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136. Julia Amanda Springs Gibson, *Lineage and Tradition of the Family of John Springs III*, (Atlanta: Press of Foote & Davies Co., 1921), 7.

137. Springs Family Papers.

138. Barbara McLean Ward, "Marketing and Competitive Innovation: Brands, Marks and Labels Found on Federal-Period Furniture" *Everyday Life in the Early Republic*, Catherine E. Hutchins, ed. (Winterthur: Winterthur Press, 1995): 213.

139. "SUPERIOR & ELEGANT CABINET FURNITURE," *The Press*, Vol. 1, Issue 117, Pg. 3, 12-16-1857.

was most likely one of White's earlier works, perhaps from the 1840s, that was never sold. The Classical style, especially in casement pieces, lasted into the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, so the pieces could also be contemporary to the time.

The Springs family was one of many Southern gentry families who ventured to Philadelphia for shopping sojourns. During the same visit, which also included a three week stay in New York City, the Springses purchased shoes, clothes, two large over mantle mirrors, jewelry, silver, outdoor iron furniture and even marble headstones for their two children who had recently died.<sup>140</sup> The 1857 trip was not the only documented time that the family traveled to New York and Philadelphia, only to return with a copious amount of housewares and personal effects. In 1848, Andrew Baxter Springs returned to South Carolina with carpets, razors, books, table clothes, shoes, coats, plates and mahogany furniture from C Schwazwaelder, a cabinetmaker in New York. The amount of the goods purchased totaled \$754.85, with the furniture costing \$321.25 alone.<sup>141</sup> Most of their furniture the Springses acquired from probably came from either New York or Philadelphia. If not near a port, patrons of Northern cabinetmakers had to rely on both coastwise shipping and canals to receive their goods. In the case of the Springses, they most likely had their furniture shipped to either Charleston or Wilmington, North Carolina then shipped up one of the waterways in the mainland.

Fortunately, the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the construction of the Santee River Canal, which expedited shipments to the Springses in Fort Mill.<sup>142</sup> With the Springses' Charleston connections and frequent travels there, the shipment from White's workshop was most likely sent there instead of Wilmington.<sup>143</sup> John Springs also shipped his cotton from Charleston to New York, validating the idea that Charleston was the Springses' main port.<sup>144</sup> However, Charles H. White did ship furniture to the

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140. Springs, 167-8.

141. "A List of Bills of Purchases in N. York and Philad. Sept 7<sup>th</sup>, 1848," Springs Family Papers.

142. Alexander, 3.

143. According to other receipts from this trip, the Springses were in Philadelphia in late April of 1857. Unfortunately, the Outward Coastal Manifests from May, 1857 (most likely when White sent the shipment out) are missing from the National Archives and Records Administration's Mid Atlantic location in Philadelphia.

144. "Sales of 110 Bales of Cotton recd. for ship New York from Charleston" 27 July 1847,

port of Wilmington at least once. On October 1, 1842, J. Lippitt, probably a commission merchant, received seventeen boxes of furniture and two bundles of chairs from White.<sup>145</sup> The Springs suite is the only case in this study of a Southerner visiting Philadelphia and directly purchasing furniture from White rather than going through a commission merchant.

## Furniture Consumption in Natchez

Natchez was one of White's other profitable markets. Nestled on the east bank of the Mississippi River, Natchez flourished in the 19<sup>th</sup> century due to cotton trade and was second only to Charleston in the amount of furniture received from Philadelphia between 1820 and 1840.<sup>146</sup> Out of the known recipients of White's work, most of them have been noted as some of the wealthiest and most influential men in antebellum Natchez. Natchezian patrons often employed commission merchants, who directly purchased furniture from Northern cabinetmakers. White shipped furniture to firms like Stanton & Buckner, Brigg & Lacoste, Becket & O'Farrell and Alfred Cochran in the 1820, 1830s and 1840s.<sup>147</sup> These commission merchants, however, were frequently based in New Orleans and not Natchez, but these men had social ties to both cities. Mississippi planters would have to have shipments of any kind from the north sent to New Orleans first then to a smaller port via steamboat.<sup>148</sup> There was a centralization of Philadelphia furniture in Natchez because of its proximity to New Orleans. In the middle of the century, the more northern ports along the Mississippi relied on flourishing mid-western cities like Cincinnati.<sup>149</sup>

Unlike Charleston, who had former cabinetmakers warehousing northern

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Springs Family Papers.

145. Manifest from Philadelphia to Wilmington, October 1, 1841 Port of Philadelphia Outward Coastal Manifest, RG 36, Box 136, NC-154 Entry 1059.

146. Ducoff-Barone, 205-6.

147. Jason Busch, "Such a Paradise Can be Made on Earth: Furniture Patronage and Consumption in Natchez, Mississippi, 1828-1863" (MA Thesis, University of Delaware, 1998): 185.

148. Ducoff-Barone, 202.

149. Ibid., 203.

furniture, commission merchants typically had no associations with the trade other than selling it and were mainly responsible for selling cotton for planters rather than selling goods to them. New Orleans did not receive as much Philadelphia furniture as did Charleston or Savannah. New York and Boston shipped the bulk of northern manufactured goods to New Orleans in the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>150</sup> However, the New Orleans port was essential to Philadelphia cabinetmakers like White because it provided access to Natchez, probably White's most profitable port. Because of the proliferation of commission merchants in Natchez, White was able to sell his goods to commission merchants in bulk rather than individual purchases.

### The September, 1836 Shipment

The 1830s was the most prosperous decade of White's Natchez patronage. In September of 1836, White sent a total of thirty-five boxes of furniture to four consignees including Elijah Bell, Levin Marshall and Henry Chotard.<sup>151</sup> Justice of the Mississippi Supreme Court, Edward Turner, also ordered furniture during this decade.<sup>152</sup> White proved to please Levin Marshall, who in 1838 ordered thirteen additional boxes of furniture.<sup>153</sup> Chotard and Marshall, who were related by marriage, both traded in and also founded the Bank of Natchez along with other White patrons John McMurran and Aylette Buckner.<sup>154</sup> These men purchased furniture from White for their various plantations in and around Natchez. Marshall purchased Richmond Hill Plantation in 1832 in nearby Adams County and Chotard lived at Somerset Plantation.<sup>155</sup> It is unclear, judging from the shipping manifests, what exactly Marshall and Chotard purchased, only

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150. Stephen Harrison, "The Furniture Trade in New Orleans, 1840-1880: The Largest Assortment Constantly on Hand" (MA Thesis, University of Delaware, 1997): 31.

151. Busch, 186.

152. Jason Busch, "Furniture Patronage in Antebellum Natchez" *Magazine Antiques*, (May 2000): 809.

153. Ibid., 187.

154. D. Clayton James, *Antebellum Natchez*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 202.

155. James, 272.



the approximate amount of wares.<sup>156</sup>

Levin Marshall also owned the Mansion House, Natchez's premier hotel, most likely in the 1820s and early 1830s. The Mansion House was under the ownership of Elijah Bell, who also received part of the September, 1836 shipment and most likely purchased furniture for the hotel. At the time of Bell's ownership, Mansion House was considered "the town's best" due to its "distinguish guests," which included Henry Clay, and "extravagant festivities" and was described as "an extensive and commodious brick edifice said to be one of the best hotels in the southwest."<sup>157</sup> Similar to the *Steamboat New York* in Philadelphia, Mansion house allowed prominent visitors to Natchez and locals to experience White's work. It is no coincidence that owners of the same hotel had White's furniture shipped to Natchez. Marshall quite possibly could have bought furniture at an earlier date for Mansion House. To maintain a sense of cohesive decoration, Bell opted to patronize White a second time.

### Buckner & Stanton and Other Commission Merchants

White's documented shipments to commission merchants in the South were large, totaling from thirty-four to fifty-three either "boxes of furniture" or "packages of domestic mdgs" (probably an abbreviation for manufactured goods). These hefty shipments meant that White must have maintained a well-stocked wareroom so he could supply the furniture in such quantities, which may be why he started warehousing in the 1830s. It is unlikely that all of the packages contained only White's furniture, as prevalent furniture makers often sent out large shipments that included other craftsmen's work.<sup>158</sup> A portion of these shipments was intended for certain individuals. In November of 1839, White sent fifty-three packages of "domestic mdgs." To Buckner,

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156. The papers for both Henry Chotard and Levin R. Marshall, which possibly include receipts from White that could determine the exact articles of furniture purchased are housed at the Louisiana State University Library in the "Lemuel Parker Conner Family Papers, 1810-1953."

157. James, 189. Mary Carol Miller, *Lost Landmarks of Mississippi*, (Oxford: University of Mississippi Press, 2002), 40.

158. Busch, *Such a Paradise*, 178.

Stanton Whitridge & Co. with some of them intended to go to EC Wilkins of New Orleans. When commission merchants consigned furniture, it meant that Northern artisans like White “assumed shared commercial risks as well as shared commercial practices such as packing, warrants, discounts, and credits, the actual behavior of the export furniture trade to each of the two main markets differed considerably.”<sup>159</sup>

Both David Stanton and Aylette Buckner were influential members of Natchez and New Orleans society, with Stanton owning numerous plantations and townhomes including Stanton Hall.<sup>160</sup> It is plausible that both Stanton and Buckner purchased some of the furniture from White to furnish their own houses, while the rest sold to random patrons who opted to purchase furniture through merchants instead of directly from the manufacturer. However, as Jason Busch asserts, indirect buyers “knew who made the furniture they were receiving from commission merchants, even if the planter did not originally order it, because of the expense charged for furniture produced by the most sought after Philadelphia cabinetmakers in the 1830s.”<sup>161</sup>

Coincidentally, some of White’s documented Natchez patrons, including Alvarez Fisk and Levin Marshall, were instrumental in the creation of the Natchez Steam Packet Company in 1838. In the heyday of White’s southern patronage, the steamboat was the primary mode of transportation for both Atlantic-coastal and river-based shipping. For coastal movement the Northeast and the south, “railroads had little effect,” thus Natchez relied on smaller ships between there and New Orleans to receive northern-made wares.<sup>162</sup> In the case of New Orleans, the city completely disregarded any railroad construction because overseas trade was so important.<sup>163</sup> It is possible that the men that created the Natchez Steam Packet Company because they saw the need for expedited shipping for their own personal reasons, one of which was the capability to have their domestic wares like furniture, shipped Natchez more easily. Either way, Charles

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159. Ducoff-Barone, 201.

160. James, 157.

161. Busch, *Such a Paradise*, 178.

162. George Rogers Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860* (New York: Rinehart Press, 1951), 168.

163. Harrison, 17.

H. White was a well-known name to Natchez nabobs, and his popularity as one of “Philadelphia’s most significant furniture exporters” throughout the 1820s, 1830s and 1840s continued.<sup>164</sup>

## Alvarez Fisk

Alvarez Fisk was another commission merchant responsible for distributing White’s furniture via consignment to Natchez and New Orleans. Known as one of the most influential philanthropic nabobs in antebellum Natchez, Fisk had offices in New Orleans also. On October 17, 1842, Fisk received a shipment of thirty-four boxes of furniture from White, again presumably for Fisk to either partially partake in himself and to sell as a commission merchant. The 1842 New Orleans directory lists him as such profession, working at 109 Tchoupitoulas Street.<sup>165</sup> Part of his shipment was labeled “A Fisk,” probably meaning that certain pieces were set aside for him specifically. Since limited, documented examples of White’s furniture exist from the 1840s and this particular decade saw his transition between late Classical/Empire to Gothic Revival and Rococo Revival, it is hard to determine the forms of style patrons like Fisk and Levin purchased. Natchez nabobs had a penchant for high-end and fashionable furniture, thus the domestic decorative arts trends in Natchez closely mimicked those of Philadelphia and New York. However, some pieces sent to Natchez around the same time still survive and can be used as clues.

## Surviving Furniture in Natchez

Between 1824 and 1838, Charlotte Bingaman purchased furniture from White,

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164. Busch, 185. Mr. Busch notes Crawford Riddle and Cook & Parkin as also being major exporters to Natchez. Nabob also is an antebellum term for a person of great wealth or prominence.

165. 1842 City Directory, Orleans Parish, LA, <http://files.usgwarchives.net/la/orleans/history/directory/1842cdaf.txt>.

which until 2002, was still in Arlington Plantation.<sup>166</sup> This selection of pieces included a pair of matching box sofas and dressing tables (figs. 2.12 and 2.20), all of which had labels that included White's 109 Walnut Street address. Other pieces in Arlington, including two beds and a hat stand have strikingly similar applied motifs to them and could also be part of Bingaman's furniture shipment.<sup>167</sup> These pieces are all late Classical and feature typical late-Empire motifs including gadrooning and cornucopias. Around the same time, John T. McMurran of Melrose Plantation bought a sideboard (fig. 4.2) and pair of card tables (fig. 4.3) which are also Empire and labeled. It is possible that McMurran returned to White for furniture a decade or so later and purchased the revolving sofa that is still in the house (fig. 2.40). It appears in the 1865 Melrose inventory. The only other revolving sofa known to exist, which is almost identical in detail and form to the one at Melrose does have a White label and "the rarity of the form alone suggest that both revolving sofas were made by the same firm."<sup>168</sup> The fact the McMurran also was previously one of White's customers also adds validation to this attribution. The other revolving sofa also has a southern provenance, as it was brought from New Orleans to Richmond, Virginia in the 1850s and was owned by Robert McCandlish Jones, CSA First Virginia Regiment (fig. 2.39).<sup>169</sup>

## Southern Independence: A Break In Trade

As tension began to build leading up to the advent of the Civil War, many southerners stopped patronizing northern manufacturers. Strong sympathizers began to fault members of the southern aristocracy who patronized Northern industries. No other organization or publication was more vocal than *Debow's Review*, a periodical that included articles such as *Wants of the South* and *Southern Wealth, Northern*

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166. Busch, *Such a Paradise*, 184-5.

167. Ibid., 188.

168. Ibid., 190.

169. "A Rare American Rococo Carved Rosewood-Grained Walnut Tete-a-Tete," *Louisiana Purchase Auction, October 11 & 12, 2008*, Neal Auction, Lot 390, <http://www.nealauction.com/archive/1008/lot/furniture/american/>, accessed 12/22/2012.

*Profits* right before the Civil War. These diatribes intended to persuade Southerners to become wholly independent from the north and delineate the main *wants* of the South (commercial, agricultural, industrial, educational and literacy) and how to abandon any Northern dependency regarding these matters with commercial independence as “one of the leading aims of the South.”<sup>170</sup> *Debows* blames pro-secession wealthy southerners for supporting Northern industries strictly in the name of luxury. In Charleston, for example, planters were scolded for building elaborate and luxurious dwellings in which “all the materials for the entire construction and furnishing of which have been brought from the North!”<sup>171</sup> The article then states that collectively the aristocracy were:

“The very men who must vehemently abuse the Yankees and their humbugs, are generally the first to contradict their own doctrines, by buying from them even the necessities of life, to say nothing of the luxuries which might reasonably be supposed to be furnished at a cheaper rate by those who have the most extensive facilities for manufacturing.”<sup>172</sup>

White’s patrons were guilty of this claim. They were the extravagantly wealthy who would not settle for the comparatively mediocre domestic wares of the South, despite their allegiance to the antebellum South’s way of life. Philadelphia was starting to industrialize; cabinetmakers had access to the finest materials, the most innovative tools and the urban setting necessary for a successful marketing. Due to the overwhelming transition to agricultural economy, southern craftsmen were not so fortunate. To the most ardent secessionists, those who purchased “Yankee goods” were “as often ‘sold’ as the articles themselves.”<sup>173</sup>

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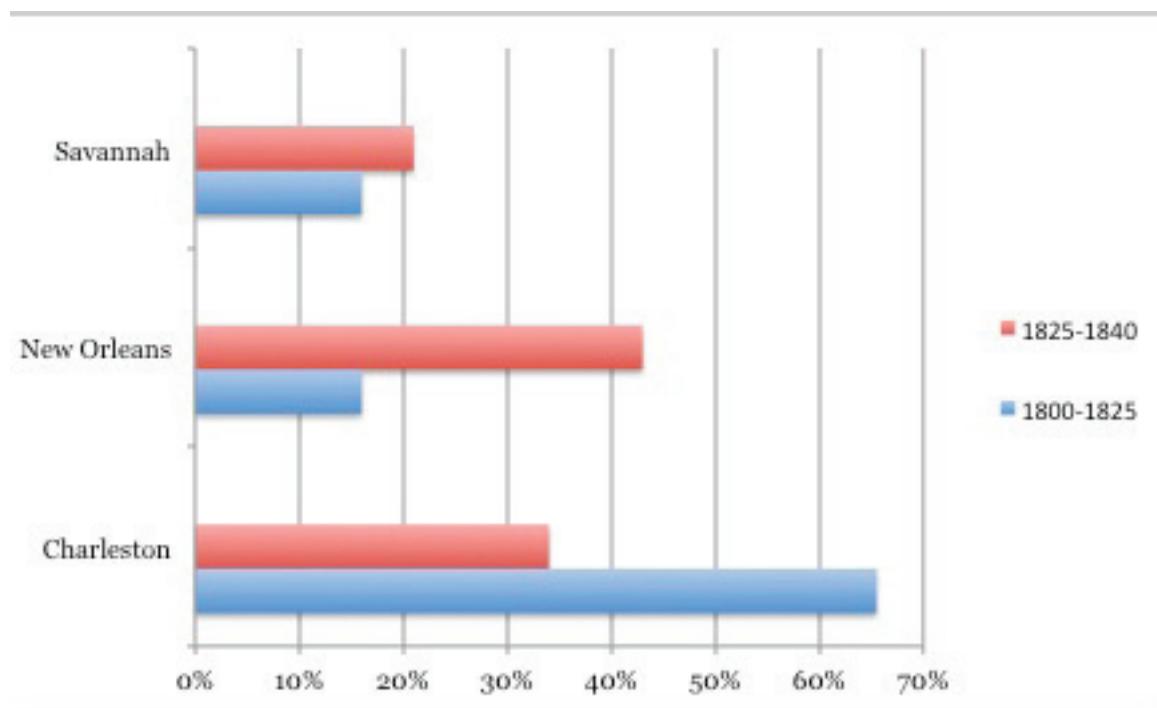
170. Edwin Herriott, “Wants of the South” *Debow’s Review, Agricultural, Commercial, industrial progress and resources*, Vol. 29, Issue 2 (Aug, 1860): 216, from *Making of America Journals*, University of Michigan, <http://name.umd.umich.edu/acg1336.1-29.002>, accessed 12/14/2012.

171. Ibid., 216.

172. Ibid., 216.

173. Ibid., 218





*Figure 4.1:* Philadelphia furniture shipments to Southern ports, 1800-1825 & 1825-1840  
Ducoff-Barone, "Early Industrialization of the Philadelphia  
Furniture Industry, 1800-1840," 205-6



*Figure 4.2:* Dining Room at Melrose Plantation, Natchez, MS  
Sideboard in background, Charles H. White, c. 1833, Philadelphia  
Melrose Plantation, Natchez, MS  
Originally owned by John T. McMurran  
Mahogany  
HABS, [www.memory.loc.gov](http://www.memory.loc.gov)



*Figure 4.3:* Card Table, Charles H. White, c. 1824-35, Philadelphia  
Melrose Plantation, Natchez, MS  
Originally owned by John T. McMurran  
Southern Export  
Mahogany  
Bush, *Furniture Patronage in Antebellum Natchez*, 811

## CHAPTER FIVE | CONCLUSION

After Charles H. White died in 1876, his legacy as a furniture maker was quite forgotten, in large measure because of the burgeoning mass-production industry that started a few years after White retired. Men like George Henkels and Daniel Pabst dominated the late 19<sup>th</sup> century furniture scene and overshadowed mid-century craftsmen. Empire work was not yet considered ‘antique,’ therefore little attention was paid to furniture in this style. Likewise, White’s Rococo Revival works were essentially the first period of Rococo Revival in America and by the 1870s and 1880s, newer forms and more intricately detailed furniture were introduced, making early Rococo-Revival out of fashion. However, one year before he died, White was recognized in *The Manufactories and Manufacturers of Pennsylvania in the Nineteenth Century* by Charles Robson as being “head of one of the most prestigious of Philadelphia’s furniture houses” while discussing Thomas Moore, one of his apprentices and foremen who at the time ran Moore and Campion in Philadelphia.<sup>174</sup>

### The Resurgence of White in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Nearly a century later, Charles White’s name resurfaced in the Philadelphia furniture world. In 1970, Mrs. Paul Schwartz offered the Philadelphia Museum of Art a c. 1834 Charles H. White secretary with “butler drawers, Gothic-arched pigeon wholes and fan motifs” (fig. 5.1) at no cost.<sup>175</sup> At the time, the Museum’s curators thought the piece was the work of Anthony Quervelle, who, until the 1970s, was the attributed cabinetmaker for nearly all the unlabeled Philadelphia Empire furniture. It was not until 1972 that the Museum discovered the piece was actually labeled “C.H. & J.F. White Cabinet Warehouse, 107 & 109 Walnut st., Phila.” White, who was relatively unknown

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174. Charles Robson, *The Manufactories and Manufacturers of Pennsylvania in the Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia, 1875), 46.

175. Nessa Forman, “Delay Costs Art Museum \$10,000” *The Evening Bulletin*, 10 May 1974.

to nearly all, became the focus of a new research project for Philadelphia curators and antique dealers, especially Anthony Stuempfig. By 1974, the piece was valued at \$10,000 (it was purchased for \$375 two years earlier) and finally purchased by the Philadelphia Museum of Art. It was then that White, again, became a recognizable name in Philadelphia furniture. About this time too, the entirety of both Empire and Victorian furniture saw a new-found resurgence. Scholars like Kenneth Ames made the study of Victorian era furniture a reputable part of American decorative arts scholarship.

One of the poignant causes of White's resurgence was the Philadelphia Museum of Art's bicentennial exhibit entitled *Philadelphia: Three Centuries of American Art*. This exhibit displayed the high points of Philadelphia art throughout its three hundred year history. Curators sought out pieces of both fine and decorative art. The exhibit included White's lady's worktable (figs. 2.6-2.8), which the Philadelphia Museum of Art purchased in 1973. Inclusion of this piece in the exhibit further legitimized White's work, whereas, only years earlier "you couldn't give away that heavy empire-style furniture."<sup>176</sup> In August 1974, dealer Stuempfig further introduced White to the antiques market by including his label from 109 Walnut Street in "Anthony A.P. Stuempfig Classical American Empire Masterpieces" advertisement in the *Magazine Antiques* (fig. 5.2). Scholars started to question the validity of earlier attributed Empire furniture. White began to replace Anthony Quervelle as an attributed maker of unmarked pieces, including a pier table at the Athenaeum of Philadelphia (fig. 5.3).<sup>177</sup> Since then, White's pieces often appear in Classical American auctions, with many of them appraised in the thousands.<sup>178</sup>

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176. Nessa Forman, "Who was CH White & Why Are They Buying His Work," PMA Craftsman file, Charles H. White.

177. Roger W. Moss, Jr, "The Athenaeum of Philadelphia" *The Magazine Antiques* (December 1978): 1270. The caption states that "Recent research suggests that the table may have come from the shop of Charles H. White. In the past it has been attributed to Anthony G. Quervelle."

178. Figure 2.11 was valued at \$1,500-2,500 in 2010, figure 2.39 was appraised for \$5,000-7,000 and figure A.13 was worth \$3,000-5,000.



## Current Interpretation of White's Work

Today, Charles H. White's work is included in numerous museum collections along the Eastern seaboard. The significance of these pieces and reasons for inclusion in the collections varies and the interpretation of each piece is dependent on a range of circumstances. The type of museum also plays a large role in determining the significance, whether it be cultural or aesthetic. The dining room suite at Springfield Plantation will soon join this list and be interpreted as artifact of opulence and reminder of the social and economic dependence between the North and South prior to the Civil War.

Those pieces in museums today tend to be noteworthy because of their artistic merit. The Rococo Revival suite (figs. 2.36, 2.37 and 2.38) in the Brooklyn Museum of Art, though not on display, was a gift of Brooklyn resident Louise G. Zabriskie in 1940. This suite represents high-quality examples of a particular style of furniture. However, since the suite does not meet the Brooklyn Museum's highest collecting priorities of criteria, the Museum has given three of the side chairs to other museums including The Cleveland Museum of Art, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and the Philadelphia Museum of Art.<sup>179</sup> Since the Philadelphia Museum of Art is the only museum out of the four that has some invested interest in the origins of the piece, the suite is noteworthy for its aesthetic merit and craftsmanship. Likewise, the armchair at the Carnegie Museum of Art (fig. 3.2) is noted for its aesthetic value rather than its provenance, even though Richard Rush originally owned it. The Philadelphia Museum of Art's lady's worktable is a significant piece in the museum's collection because of its association with the city's rich decorative arts tradition. The museum found interest in the work table because it is from the hand of a Philadelphia maker generally, but not because it was Charles H. White.

White's work now in historic sites' collection is important for its their social connotations. In 1913-15 early Germantown historian Edwin Jellett donated the c. 1825-

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179. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Craftsman file, Charles H. White.

28 Charles H. White sideboard (fig. 2.1) to the Germantown Historical Society, originally called “The Site and Relic Society of Germantown.”<sup>180</sup> The piece supposedly belonged to Bronson Alcott, father of author Louisa May Alcott and is an antiquarian relic in traditional historical society setting. It was valued for its Alcott provenance, not for its style or its construction.

Melrose Plantation’s collection of White’s work (figs. 2.40, 4.2 and 4.3) is a crucial element of the site’s interpretation because all the pieces are original to the house and represent domestic life and style in antebellum Natchez. They also add to the authenticity of the site’s experience, as they were once functional pieces of furniture used by the McMurrin family. White’s pieces in the South have a different context than those in the North. They represent a number of different stories in American history including the industrialization of the North compared to the agrarian society of the South, as well as 19<sup>th</sup>-century transportation and the wealthy’s desire for the most up-to-date fashion, even if that meant importation.

None of these pieces are valued strictly because they are the work of Charles H. White. This thesis is meant to shed light on White as a craftsman and allow for his furniture to be appreciated as works by a skilled, well-documented cabinetmaker. While all artifacts carry different values for different stakeholders, the furniture’s association with Charles H. White is now a relevant reason for valuation at historic sites and museums.

## Interpretation of the Springfield Dining Room Suite

Springfield Plantation (fig. 5.4) is an 1806 farmhouse in Fort Mill, South Carolina, approximately fifteen miles south of Charlotte, North Carolina. Owned by the Springs family since its construction, Springfield was built by cotton planter John Springs III (1782-1853). It is one of the oldest surviving structures in York County,

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180. GHS 72/1984.19, object file, Germantown Historical Society, Collection of Historic Germantown.

South Carolina. The site originally included a number of outbuildings, but only a barn exists today. Originally Catawba Indian land, John Springs III purchased Springfield's 2.75 acres in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Springses were one of the wealthiest families in South Carolina during the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, eventually opening textile mills after the Civil War and founding Springmaid, the second largest textile manufacturer in the twentieth century.

John Springs III's son, Andrew Baxter Springs (1819-1886) inherited Springfield from his father and lived there with his family. He was a delegate in the South Carolina Legislature and continued to run a lucrative cotton plantation until the Civil War. Andrew Baxter Springs was one of 170 men to sign the South Carolina Ordinance of Secession in December, 1860. Throughout the Civil War, Springs played a pivotal role in South Carolina's war efforts as the Commission of Subscriptions and also hosted Jefferson Davis and the Confederate cabinet in April, 1865.

The house currently serves as office space for Leroy Springs & Co., Inc., a recreational and educational non-profit with close ties to the Springs family. Leroy Springs & Co., Inc. is planning to relocate to a new building within the next five years and plans to run Springfield as a historic house museum. The family has hired preservation professionals to conduct historical research, paint analysis and interpretive planning processes. Leroy Springs & Co, Inc. plans to use much of the furniture in the in the site's interpretation. The Springs family also has a heavily-consulted archive in Fort Mill with a large collection of documents and objects. Judging from the craftsmanship and quality of Springfield's 19<sup>th</sup>-century furniture, a majority of it was most likely made in either Philadelphia or New York.

## Interpretation

Andrew Baxter (1819-1886) and Blandina Springs (1826-1902) purchased this furniture suite, original to the house, in April 1857 from Charles H. White while on a trip to New York and Philadelphia. Multiple generations of the Springs family would travel

up north, usually for pleasure, and return with large quantity of goods including clothing, furniture, shoes, outdoor furniture and even gravestones. For the most part, wealthy planters in the south, especially in the backcountry, did not have access local high-end manufactured goods. After the Revolutionary War, the south became an agrarian economy, and most craftsmen turned to farming to earn a living. Furniture produced in the south was generally considered sub-par to that from Philadelphia, New York, Boston or Baltimore furniture. In order for Andrew Baxter Springs to lavishly furnish Springfield, he had to go north.

The Springs family had connections to Philadelphia. Visiting family or sightseeing was the perfect opportunity to shop for the finest wares in the country. In 1857, the railroads were not yet widespread in the Carolinas, so the Springses traveled by steamship from Charleston to Philadelphia. They also shipped their purchases back the same way. Once the Springses cargo arrived in Charleston, it would then travel up the South Carolina rivers to Fort Mill. Many of White's pieces are either stenciled or paper labeled, but these are not. It perhaps was not labeled because the piece was spoken for and already sold. White also retired the same year the Springses bought the suite, so he was not trying to advertise to potential clients in South Carolina. A label also meant that the piece was under warrantee, and a warrantee would be unnecessary for a customer 500 miles away.

The cabinetmaker responsible for this suite is Charles H. White of Philadelphia (1796-1876). White was one of the most prolific cabinetmakers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the city, working for nearly fifty years. White produced furniture in different styles over his career including Empire, Rococo Revival and Gothic Revival, with Empire being his prevalent. The Empire style was popular during the first four decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and a period of Neoclassicism. Common characteristics of the Empire style include lion paw's feet, cornucopia motifs, fans, gadrooning and columnar forms. One peculiar attribute of this suite is the form of the chairs. They do not follow the typical neoclassical forms but rather Queen Anne, an early 18<sup>th</sup> century furniture style. The chairs have elements like pad feet, curved shoulders and solid vase-shaped splats (see figs. 5.5, 5.6

and 5.7). However, White incorporates more contemporary motifs like the cornucopias and feathers within the splats. The seats are curled horsehair and were originally upholstered in black leather, which the family replaced in the early 2000s (see fig. 5.8).

The case pieces and the table are of a finely-finished mahogany with intricately-carved details on the columnar elements. The tops of the columns have Ionic capitals, pineapples, possibly in homage to the South, and the bottom turned elements have rich foliage and feather motifs. Gadrooning lines the top and bottom edges of the pieces. The feet for all of the pieces are lion's paws. The buffet has a pull-out shelf for convenience, two drawers with metal pulls and a cabinet on the bottom. Typically, sideboards made during this time have backsplashes or looking glasses connected to the top of piece, but this one does not. It is a very low piece, which would allow for the owner to hang a looking glass or portraiture above it. The sideboard also has a set of eight pressed-glass knobs, most likely original to the piece, a large center cabinet and two flanking cabinets. The top of the piece has a large drawer and two Bombay-shaped drawers on either side. There is also a large drawer in the bottom center of the piece. The table is an extension table with two leaves. When the leaves are not in place, the base is pushed together to form one large form with four feet. The table also has a gadrooned edge.

When the Springses bought the dining room suite, White worked at 250 Chestnut Street, the premiere shopping thoroughfare in the country. When the family returned back to Springfield, they brought back expensive, nationally-known work. Andrew Baxter fit the description for White's typical patron. White himself was a prominent figure in Philadelphia society. He was a founding manager of the Franklin Institute and had family connections to such illustrious figures in American history including Richard Stockton and the Newbold family. Most of White's clientele were wealthy planters, merchants and bankers from both the North and South. White was a popular cabinetmaker with the wealthy in southern urban centers like Charleston, New Orleans and Natchez. Today, a number of museums and house museums including the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Brooklyn Museum, Carnegie Museum and Melrose




Plantation own White's work, both Empire and Rococo Revival styles.

This furniture suite is a reminder of the Springses' use of their wealth in order to keep up with the domestic fashions of the day. It is also a link between North and South. Before the Civil War, both sections of the country relied on one another in both a social and economy capacity. The suite is indicative of a time in American history where both parts of the country cohesively shared the same fashions and trends, despite the rift that was to come only three years later.



*Figure 5.1: Desk, Charles H. White, c. 1828-35, Philadelphia  
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA  
Mahogany  
Boor, Philadelphia Empire Furniture, 427*

ANTHONY A. P. STUEMPFIG  
CLASSICAL AMERICAN EMPIRE MASTERPIECES



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Figure 5.2: Advertisement, Anthony A.P. Stuempfig, 1974, Philadelphia  
*The Magazine Antiques*, August, 1974, 204





*Figure 5.3:* Pier Table, attributed to Charles H. White, c. 1830-35, Philadelphia  
Athenaeum of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA  
Mahogany  
Photo by Author



*Figure 5.4:* Springfield Plantation, c. 1806  
Photo by Author





*Figure 5.5:* Arm chair, Charles H. White, c. 1857, Philadelphia  
Springfield Plantation, Fort Mill, SC  
Originally owned by Andrew Baxter Springs  
Southern Export  
Mahogany  
Photo by Author



*Figure 5.6:* Splat, sidechair, Charles H. White, c. 1857, Philadelphia  
Springfield Plantation, Fort Mill, SC  
Originally owned by Andrew Baxter Springs  
Southern Export  
Mahogany  
Photo by Author



*Figure 5.7:* Side Chair, c. 1730, Philadelphia  
Walnut  
Logan family provenance  
Courtesy of The National Society of The Colonial Dames of  
America in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania at STENTON





*Figure 5.8:* Dining Room Suite at Springfield, c. 1990  
Photo courtesy of Springs-Close Family Archives

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## APPENDIX A | MISCELLANEOUS IMAGES

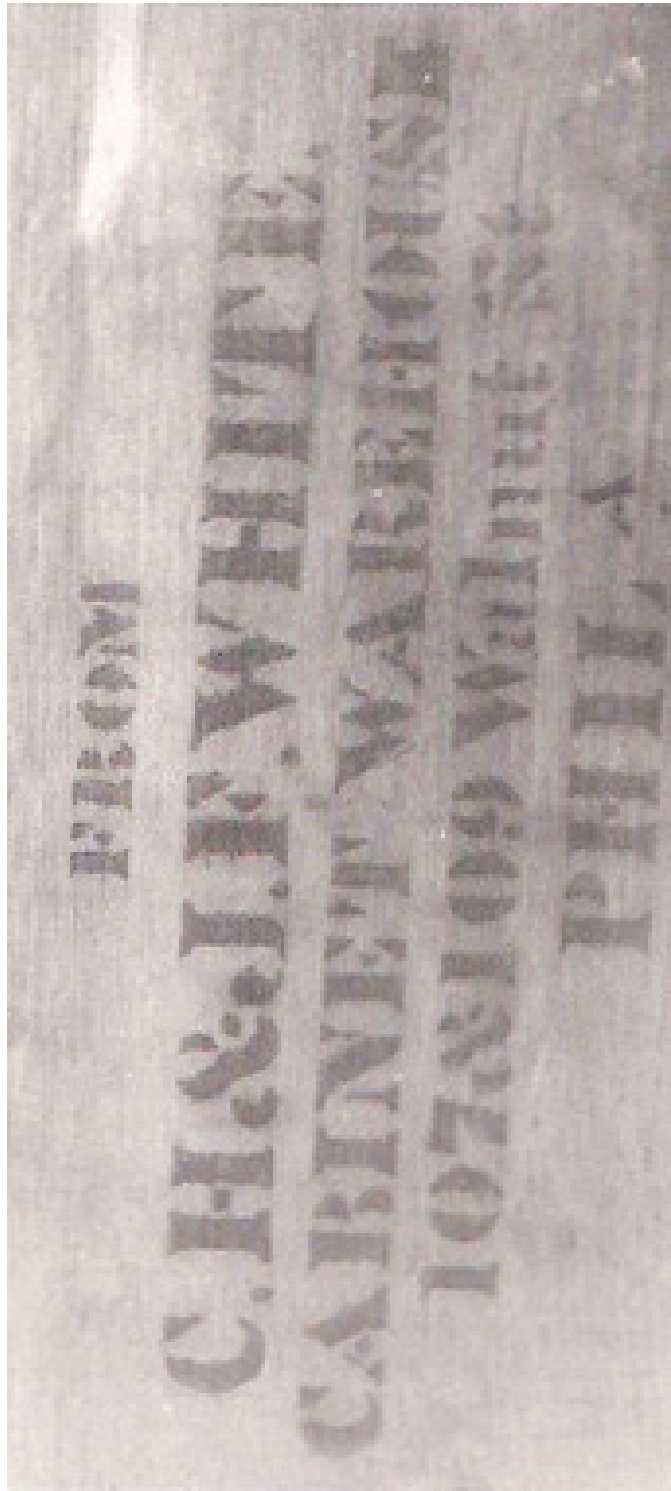


Figure A.1: Stencil of Charles H and John F. White  
Boor, *Philadelphia Empire Furniture*, 73

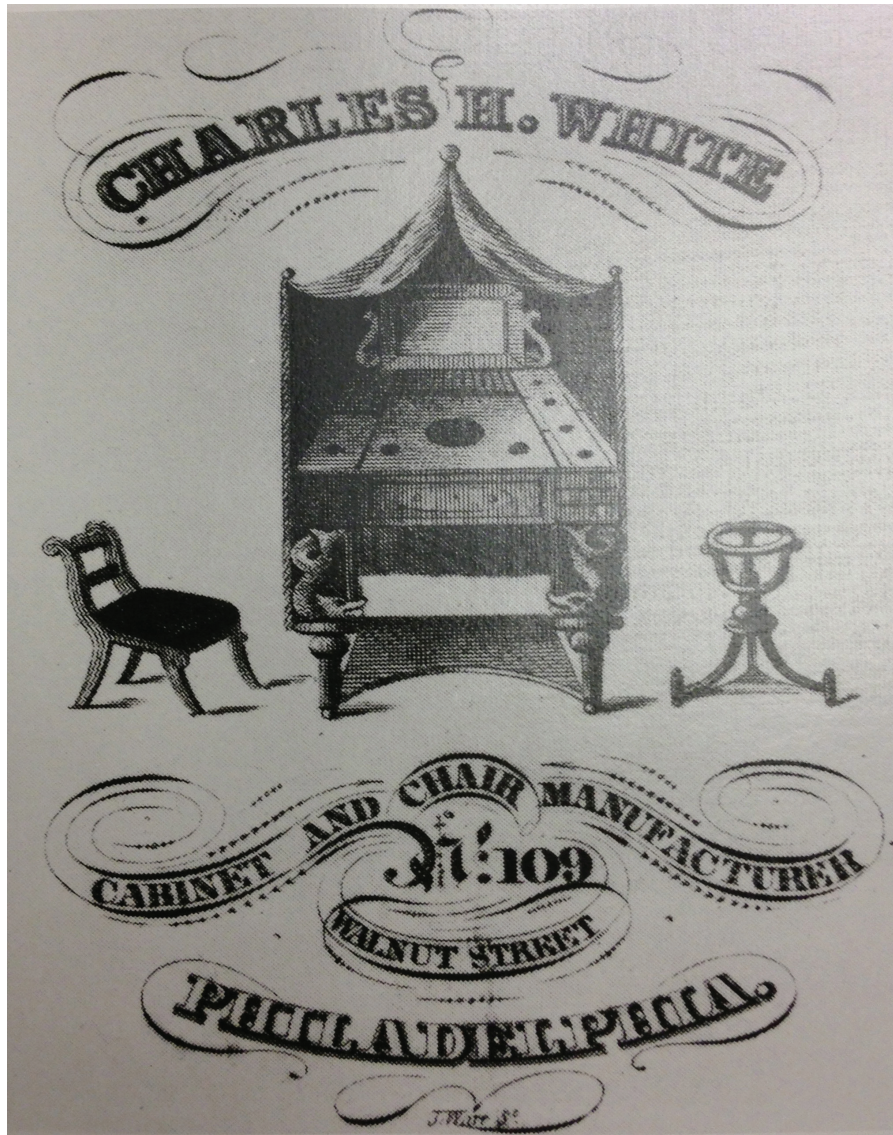


Figure A.2: Charles H. White Label  
Owner: Anthony AP Steumpfig  
Decorative Arts Photographic Collection Acc. No 75.3



*Figure A.3: Dining Table, Charles H. White, c. 1827, Philadelphia*  
The Winterthur Library: Decorative Arts Photographic Collection  
Private Collection  
Mahogany  
Boor, *Philadelphia Empire Furniture*, 155





*Figure A.4:* Sideboard, attributed to Charles H. White, c. 1835, Philadelphia  
David Stockwell Antiques, Wilmington, DE  
Mahogany  
Charles H. White, Philadelphia Museum of Art Craftsman File



*Figure A.5:* Wardrobe, Charles H. White, c. 1830, Philadelphia  
Mahogany  
Charles H. White, Craftsman File, Philadelphia Museum of Art





*Figure A.6:* Secretary Desk, attributed to Charles H. White, c. 1840, Philadelphia  
Freeman's Auction House  
Mahogany  
The Pennsylvania Sale, 11/15/2009, Lot 806, pg. 115



*Figure A.7: Worktable, Charles H. White, c. 1828-30, Philadelphia  
Private Collection  
Mahogany  
Boor, Philadelphia Empire Furniture, 279*



*Figure A.8:* Arm Chair, Charles H. White, c. 1850, Philadelphia  
Smithville Mansion, Easthampton, NJ  
Originally owned by Michael Earl Newbold  
Chestnut  
Decorative Arts Photographic Collection Acc. No. 1978.1455



*Figure A.9:* Side Chair, Charles H. White, c. 1850, Philadelphia  
Smithville Mansion, Easthampton, NJ  
Originally owned by Michael Earl Newbold  
Walnut  
Decorative Arts Photographic Collection Acc. No. 1978.1454





*Figure A.10: Sofa, Charles H. White, c. 1850, Philadelphia  
Smithville Mansion, Easthampton, NJ  
Originally owned by Michael Earl Newbold*

Chestnut

Decorative Arts Photographic Collection Acc. No. 11978.1453





*Figure A.11: Étagère, Charles H. White, c. 1850, Philadelphia  
Smithville Mansion, Easthampton, NJ  
Originally owned by Michael Earl Newbold  
Walnut  
Decorative Arts Photographic Collection Acc. No. 1981.1671*



*Figure A.12:* Dresser, attributed to Charles H. White, c. 1850, Philadelphia  
Originally owned by White's descendants  
Mahogany  
Charles H. White, Craftsman File, Philadelphia Museum of Art



*Figure A:13:* Library Chair, attributed to Charles H. White, c. 1850, Philadelphia  
Neal Auction Company  
Summer Estate Auction, June 27 & 28, 2009, Lot 135  
<http://www.nealauction.com/archive/0609/index.html>

## APPENDIX B | WILL OF CHARLES H. WHITE

I, Charles H. White of the City of Philadelphia, formerly Cabinet Maker, being of sound mind, memory and understanding and desirous to dispose of my worldly affairs, while I have strength and capacity so to do, hereby make and publish my Last-Will and Testament in manners and form the following:  
Whereas by Deed of Trust detail the seventh day of October AD1852, recorded at Philadelphia from number 331 to 337 inclusive, In Trust for certain uses and purposed therein mentioned and which provided for my beloved wife Sarah, I now hereby dispose of my other estate real and personal as follows:

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| First  | I order and direct that all my just debts and funeral expenses be first paid satisfied and discharged.   |
| Second | I give and bequeath to my grandson Charles H. White Jr. my hunting ? cased gold watch, my duck gun? one of my Franklin Institute silver medals, and also the sum of Two thousand dollars, which I give to him for his kindness and deserved merit in having assisted his widowed mother to support her family. |
| Third  | I give and bequeath to my grandson Charles Godfrey Koop; son of my beloved deceased daughter Sallie C. Koop, one of my Franklin Institute silver medals.   |
| Forth  | I give an bequeath to my grandson Albert W. Newbold The traveling case made of Amboique and William Penn Treaty Elm Tree Wood, formerly belonging to his uncle Albert L. White, also one of my Franklin Institute silver medals.   |
| Fifth  | I give and bequeath to my beloved wife Sarah, any of my furniture she may select to the amount if five hundred dollars for her own absolute use.   |

- Sixth            I enjoin my executors or executor to set apart a fund sufficient to produce an annual net income of two hundred dollars, and to pay over said net income in half yearly payments to my sister Phebe Scoyen or any other persons with whom my beloved sister Clarinda White may board for the support, maintenance and medical bills of my said sister Clarinda during her natural life, and on her death said payments of said net income to cease, and the principal thereof to fall into the residence of my estate hereinafter mentioned.
- Seventh        I give, devise and bequeath to my beloved daughter Rebecca L. Newbold, who is the only survivor of all my dear children, and to her heirs and assigns, A;; the Rest of the Residue and Reamainder of my Estate, real personal and \_\_\_\_\_ not included in the said Deed of Trust and not in this Will, hereinbefore, disposes of otherwise; and in giving my said Residuary Estate to my said daughter Rebecca L. Newbold, I wish her to have sufficient means to render aid to any of my dear grandchildren, or any other members of my beloved family whom she may think stand in the need of assistance, as I believe from her untiring devotion to the comfort of others, as well as myself that such acts will be here greatest employment.
- Eighth         I hereby nominate and appoint my son-in-law Michael F. Newbold, and his wife, my daughter Rebecca L. Newbold executors of this my Last Will and testament.

In witness whereof I have hereinto set my hand and soul this Twenty Seventh day of May AD 1872.

Chas. H. White

Signed and sealed and published and declared by the above named Charles H. White, as and for his last will and testament in the presences of us, who at his request have hereinto subscribed our names as witnesses, in the presences of this said testator and of each other.

Geo. L. Ashmead  
Wm. E. Schuman



I, Charles White, the testator within named to make and publish this codicil to my within last will. Whereas since the making of my said Last Will the circumstances of my estate render it expedient to alter my said Last Will as to part of the second clause thereof Now. I hereby revoke and annul so much of the said second clause as gives a legacy of Two thousand Dollars to my grandson Charles H. White Jr. and in view and place of said legacy I give and devise unto my said grandson Charles H. White Jr. his heirs and assigns All that my tract of land of about one hundred and ten acres situate on the Road from Pemberton to Hanover Furnace in Pemberton Township County of Burlington and State of New Jersey which I purchased of Edward Carpenter, together with the house, barn and other improvements thereon. in witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this Thirteenth day of June AD 1876.

Chas. H White

Signed, sealed, published and declared by the above named Charles H. White and for a codicil to his said Last Will and Testament in the presence of us, who at his request have here unto subscribed our names as witnesses in the presence of the said Testator and of each other.

Geo. L. Ashmead  
James C. Percy

City and County of Philadelphia, SS.

Register's Office, September 6, 1876

Then personally appeared Geo. L Ashmead and  
Wm. E. Lehmen the subscribing witnesses  
to the foregoing last will of Chas. H. White  
deceased, on their solemn oath did say that they were present,  
and did see and hear Charles H. White deceased, the Testator  
therein named, sign seal, publish and declare the same as for his  
last will and testament, and that at the doing thereof he was of sound,  
disposing mind, memory, and understanding, to the best of their knowledge and belief.

\_\_\_\_\_ and subscribed  
before me, the date above.

Geo. L. Ashmead  
Wm. E. Lehman

\_\_\_\_\_ Register.

City and County of Philadelphia, SS.

Register's Office, September 6, 1876

Then personally appeared Geo. L Ashmead and  
James C. Perry the subscribing witnesses  
to the foregoing codicil to the last will of Chas. H. White  
deceased, on their solemn oath did say that they were present,  
and did see and hear Charles H. White deceased, the Testator  
therein named, sign seal, publish and declare the same as and for a codicil  
of his last will and testament, and that at the doing thereof he was of sound,  
disposing mind, memory, and understanding, to the best of their knowledge and belief.

\_\_\_\_\_ and subscribed  
before me, the date above.

Geo. L. Ashmead  
Jas. C. Perry

City and County of Philadelphia, SS.  
Register's Office, Sept. 6, 1876

We do affirm that, as the Executors of the  
foregoing last will and testament of Chas. H. White deceased.  
we will well and truly administer the goods and chattels, rights and credits of said  
deceased, according to law; and that we will diligently and faithfully regard and well  
and truly comply with the provisions of the law relating to Collateral Inheritance. The  
said

testator died Sept 2/76 at 7 am  
affed and subscribed before me,  
the date above, and letters testamentary  
granted unto them  
723 South Tenth Street

Michael E. Newbold  
723 South Tenth Street

Rebecca L. Newbold

Jas. Brealey, Jr.

City and County of Philadelphia, S.S.

Personally came before me, REGISTER OF WILLS, in and for the said City and County,

William Armstrong & John H. Ragaty, Cabinetmakers  
who upon their solemn oaths did say, that at the request of the Executors  
they will "well and truly and without prejudices or partiality, value appraise the  
Goods and Chattels, Rights and Credits." Which were of Charles H. White  
deceased, "and in all respects perform their duties as appraisers, to the best of their skill  
and judgement,"

Sworn and subscribed this 7<sup>th</sup>  
day of September 1879 before the

Wm. Armstrong  
John H. Ragaty

Jas. Brealey, Jr.

Inventory and Appraisement of the Goods and Chattels, Rights and Credits  
which were of Charles H. White late of Philadelphia  
taken and made in conformity with the above deposition.

Furniture in the garret, front room		\$ .00
Bedstead & 4 Chairs		5.00
3 Feather Beds	4.00	12.00
Bedstead in back garret		2.00
Tool Chest & Tools		5.00
Third Story Front Room		
Stove		3.00
Bureau		5.00
Washstand & Worktable		4.00
Looking glass & chairs		8.00
Carpet on floor		6.00
Third story back room		
Bureau		8.00
Bedstead		6.00
Washstand		4.00
3 Mahogany chairs	1.00	3.00
Carpet on floor		3.00
_____ Carpet		3.00
Second Story back room		
Bedstead		7.00

Bureau		8.00
3 Mahogany chairs	1.00	3.00
Second Story back room continued		95.00
Carpet on floor		7.00
Looking glass		4.00
Furniture in front room second story		
Wardrobe		15.00
Bureau		8.00
Bedstead		5.00
Desk		12.00
Pier Table		5.00
Looking Glass		4.00
Stove	3.00	
2 Rocking chairs		5.00
2 Mahogany chairs		2.00
Washstand		7.00
Carpet on floor		8.00
Old desk in bathroom		4.00
Furniture in Parlor		
2 Sofas	\$20 & 12.00	32.00
6 Wall Chairs	6.00	36.00
2 Arm Chairs	9.00	18.00
Rocking Chair		3.00
2 Etageres	10.00	20.00
What-not		3.00
Marble top table		15.00
1 " " "		7.00
Stove		4.00
Checker top stand		4.00
Picture stand and frame		6.00
Swiss stand		2.00
Looking glass		20.00
Clock		10.00
Mantle ornaments		4.00
Books		101.00
Over		378.00



Furniture in Parlor continued		378.00
_____ Chair?		2.00
Carpet on floor		25.00
Hat rack in entry		7.00
Iron hat rack		2.00
Stair carpet		4.00
Dining Room		
Extension table		7.00
8 Mahogany chairs	1.00	8.00
2 Arm chairs	2.00	4.00
Oak Sideboard		20.00
Refrigerator		3.00
Mantle glass	2.00	
Kitchen cook stove		8.00
2 " tables		4.00
3 " chairs		1.00
Furniture in Office 333 Walnut Street		
Iron chest fire proof	5.00	
Desk		5.00
Arm chair		4.00
Stove		1.00
6 Chairs in room No. 12		6.00
9 " " " "	4.00	
\$500.00		
Wearing apparel		5.00
Gold watch		50.00
4 Silver Medals		8.00
4 Table spoons		10.00
10 Tea Spoons		8.00
Cash in Bank	1013.03	
Bond of Michael E. Newbold & etc.	850.00	
2 Bonds & Mortgages Phoebe Scoyen		480.00
Wm. Armstrong		6924.03
John H. Ragaty		

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